

Why some buyers struggle to get car loans these days

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Set in the turbulent 1960s, the Netflix drama is primed to vie for best picture honors. **In Life**



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USA TODAY EXCLUSIVE DEADLY DISCRIMINATION



The transition of Reserve, La., from slave plantation to industrial toxin-choked community reflects systemic racism. People’s poor health likely put them at greater risk with COVID-19. JASPER COLT/USA TODAY

A new threat in Louisiana’s ‘Cancer Alley’: COVID-19

How decades of racism left a community vulnerable

Rick Jervis and Alan Gomez USA TODAY

RESERVE, La. – The doctor called on Mother’s Day with the news Karen Wilson had dreaded for weeks. Your brother won’t survive the night, he told her. Expect another call soon. Wilson’s younger brother, Jules Duhe, had been on a ventilator fighting COVID-19 since April. At 2:30 a.m., the phone call came, springing her awake. Duhe, 53, was dead. Wilson sat up in bed, cold shivers running through her. Just four years earlier, Wilson had buried her older brother, James Duhe, who died of liver cancer at age 61. In August, Wilson’s sister, Shirley Jacob, already suffering congestive heart failure and other ailments, also contracted COVID-19. She died within a week. Three funerals in four years. It was nearly more than the family could handle, even in a place like Reserve, where the risk of cancer is the highest in the nation, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. “A lot of people around here were dy-



Karen Wilson lost two siblings to the virus, including Jules Duhe who spent 36 days on a ventilator, and a third to cancer a few years ago. KAREN WILSON

ing of cancer,” Wilson said. “Now, they’re dying of COVID.” In the first half of the 20th century, Reserve was a mostly white small town on the east bank of the Mississippi River adjusting to life in post-slavery Louisiana. But in the 1960s, chemical plants arrived in force. White people moved out and Afri-

See LOUISIANA, Page 6A

About the series

Racist policies mean many Black, Latino, Asian and Indigenous Americans are poorer and sicker than white Americans. The virus made these inequalities deadly. This is the second in a USA TODAY investigative series on how past and present policies make people of color more vulnerable. Read the series: [deadlydiscrimination.usatoday.com](#).

A new crisis for US struggling families

Without more federal aid, poorest Americans find they can’t meet basic needs. 1D

ELECTION 2020

Time for swaying voters almost up

President running out of chances to change minds

Joey Garrison USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Trying to claw into the lead in the race for president as time is running out, Donald Trump is specifically calling out the voters he’s struggling to win back. “To my favorite people in the world,” the president said in a video last week. “The seniors.” Tuesday in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Trump turned to another demographic that could stand in the way of his re-election. “Do me a favor, suburban women, would you please like me? I saved your damn neighborhood, OK?” As Trump’s support erodes among voters ages 65 and older, women and suburban voters, Democratic nominee Joe Biden has taken a double-digit lead in several national polls and widened margins in battleground states. The former vice president’s position has brought

“There’s very few people who are looking over the choices right now. That makes it very uphill for the president.”

Lee Miringoff Marist College Institute for Public Opinion

See UNDECIDED, Page 4A



Polls show 95% of voters have decided and can’t be persuaded. BRIANNA PACIORKA/USA TODAY NETWORK

Biden, Trump pour ad cash in battlegrounds

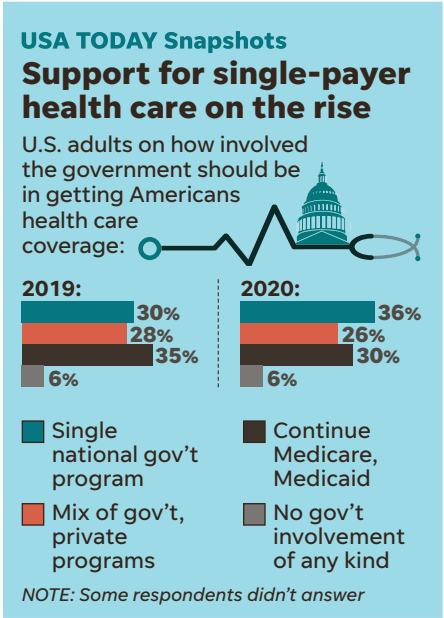
Campaigns focus on Phoenix, Philly and biggest target – Florida

Bart Jansen USA TODAY

As President Donald Trump and Democratic nominee Joe Biden wage a ferocious advertising campaign focused on a half-dozen battleground states, ground zero is a handful of crucial television markets in Florida, Arizona and Pennsylvania. Florida is the biggest ad magnet. The tipping point of the perennial swing state runs along Interstate 4 from Tampa to Orlando, a belt that holds pockets of elderly voters, suburban women, Latinos, military service members – each among the demographic slices targeted to win the presidential race. “The partisan divide is narrowest in these two markets,” said Susan MacManus, a political science professor emerita at the University of Florida, who described her home area of Tampa and Orlando as “the swing markets in the swing state.” “The whole campaign is right here,” MacManus said. In what is projected to be a record-setting year for campaign spending, Floridians are seeing a hurricane of political ads. Arizona and Pennsylvania are

See ADS, Page 4A

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GOV. GRETCHEN WHITMER BY CAROLYN KASTER/AP

Trump, Mich. governor throw more punches

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer accused President Donald Trump on Sunday of inciting domestic terrorism, her strongest words yet, following the president’s campaign appearance in Michigan on Saturday, where he repeated his criticism of her pandemic policies amid chants of “Lock her up!” 2A

FBI investigates origin of Hunter Biden material

The inquiry, in part, is to determine whether Russia is behind what was reported by the New York Post. 3A

How safe are your ballots?

USA TODAY Network reporters reviewed protocols to deal with a surge in mail-in votes in several states. 4A

Election boards prep for threats

Local officials across the USA are reviewing security plans, working with law enforcement and training poll workers to handle intimidation tactics. 5A

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Mich. governor accuses Trump of inciting terrorism

Rally comments prompt ‘lock her up’ chants

Paul Egan
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

LANSING, Mich. – Gov. Gretchen Whitmer accused President Donald Trump of inciting domestic terrorism Sunday.

“It’s incredibly disturbing that the president of the United States, 10 days after a plot to kidnap, put me on trial and execute me ... is at it again ... inciting this kind of domestic terrorism,” Whitmer said on NBC’s “Meet the Press” after a Trump campaign appearance in Michigan on Saturday.

“It is dangerous, not just for me and my family but for public servants everywhere,” Whitmer said, calling on opinion leaders to “call this out” and demand Trump tamp down his remarks.

A Trump campaign spokesman did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

Saturday night, Trump held a campaign rally at an airport near Muskegon, where he repeated criticism of Whitmer over measures she has taken to address the coronavirus pandemic, prompting crowd chants of “Lock her Up.” His summary of the alleged plot against Whitmer: “I guess they say she was threatened.”

Trump has said Whitmer should appreciate that federal officials uncovered and foiled the plot. In response to the chant from the crowd, he laughed and said, “Lock them all up.”

The campaign of Trump’s Democratic rival Joe Biden slammed the episode.

“His conduct reflects his own insecurity and envy of Gov. Whitmer’s respected record of leadership in a time of crisis,” spokesman Andrew Bates said. “It also serves as a reminder that our nation is at a crossroads.”

Federal and state officials charged 14 men in connection with alleged domestic terror plots that included a plan to kidnap Whitmer from her family’s vacation home in northern Michigan. Defendants in the case conducted surveillance of the home on two occasions and discussed abducting her by boat and taking her to Wisconsin to “stand trial” for treason, according to documents in the case.

Whitmer said Trump is “complicit” in the plot by using highly charged words to criticize her, refusing to condemn right-wing groups and encouraging such groups by tweeting comments such as “Liberate Michigan.” He urged Whitmer to meet and negotiate with demonstrators who protested her coronavirus shutdown at the state Capitol in the spring.

Whitmer, a national co-chair of former Vice President Biden’s campaign

for president, said the progress Michigan has made against the pandemic is “at risk” because of a “partisan” 4-3 state Supreme Court decision Oct. 2 that struck down as unconstitutional the Emergency Powers of Governor Act of 1945.

That statute was the major legal underpinning for Michigan’s state of emergency and Whitmer’s emergency orders related to the pandemic after courts ruled she could not extend a state of emergency beyond 28 days without approval of the Legislature, which the GOP-controlled House and Senate refused to provide.

Whitmer said the Supreme Court decision “has created a lot of confusion and has worked to undermine the work we have done here.” She said she uses the Michigan Public Health code and other powers to continue a statewide mask mandate, restrict the size of indoor and outdoor gatherings and set requirements to ensure workplace safety.

Whitmer said Trump is “complicit” in the plot by using highly charged words to criticize her, refusing to condemn right-wing groups and encouraging such groups by tweeting comments such as “Liberate Michigan.”

Trump told thousands gathered at his rally Saturday they need to get Whitmer to end Michigan’s lockdown. She lifted a stay-at-home order June 1, though some restrictions on business and other activities remain.

“We haven’t had a stay-home order since late spring,” Whitmer said Sunday, but Trump “never lets facts get in the way of comments he is making.”

She said Trump’s response to the pandemic is “the worst in the globe” because he has politicized the crisis, rather than addressing it from a science and health perspective.

“We should have acted as if we are in a war,” Whitmer said. “But not a war with one another.”

It was Whitmer’s third appearance on “Meet the Press,” the longest-running program in TV history. She appeared on the program in March and April during the height of the coronavirus pandemic.

Contributing: John Fritze, USA TODAY



Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's restrictions in response to the coronavirus epidemic have led to protests. MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

‘Amateurs’ to stand trial in alleged kidnap plot

Tresa Baldas
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

DETROIT – They weren’t successful, but that doesn’t mean they weren’t dangerous.

That’s what the prosecution argued in convincing a judge to order six men to stand trial on charges they plotted for months to kidnap Gov. Gretchen Whitmer because they were angry over her lockdown order.

“Was it a good plan?” Assistant U.S. Attorney Nils Kessler argued in court Friday. “It doesn’t look like they discussed it much.”

And it cost them, he said. “These people got caught because they’re amateurs,” Kessler said.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Sally Berens concluded the government had probable cause to charge the six defendants with conspiracy to kidnap, despite objections by defense lawyers who called the claims “outlandish” and “absurd.”

Berens denied bond to four defendants. The accused ringleader, Adam Fox, consented to detention, agreeing to remain locked up pending the outcome of his case. A sixth suspect was denied bond in Delaware and awaits extradition to Michigan.

All could face up to life in prison if convicted.

Defense attorneys argued that there was no real plan to kidnap Whitmer, just angry gun enthusiasts talking tough. They scoffed at allegations that the ringleader in the group wanted to take Whitmer out on a boat and leave her stranded in Lake Michigan.

They balked at another claim that the group wanted to drive her to Wisconsin and try her for treason.

“Really? Was there really an agreement here, or is it just loose talk?” defense attorney Scott Graham said, claiming “common sense” suggests it was “loose talk.”

The five members ordered to stand trial are:

- Adam Fox, 37.
- Ty Garbin, 25.
- Kaleb Franks, 26.
- Daniel Harris, 23.
- Brandon Caserta, 32.

Barry Croft, 44, of Bear, Delaware, was denied bond and awaits extradition to face the conspiracy charge.

Defense lawyers tried for two days to convince the judge that their clients deserved to be free on bond, arguing that the suspects are lawful gun owners who held training exercises, potlucks and enjoyed playing paintball.

The FBI watched the group for months and embedded paid informants and undercover agents who recorded conversations and videotaped activities that led to criminal charges.

Attorney Mark Satawa, who represents Garbin, asked the judge to release his client on bond and let him live with his parents, with a tether for security. He argued that Garbin has “no criminal history at all” and has a good job making \$28 an hour as an airline mechanic. His father, an Army veteran, could keep an eye on him.

“There is nothing that my client could do to endanger the community under those set of circumstances,” Satawa argued. “Lock Mr. Garbin up, sure. But at home.”

Kessler said neither Garbin’s parents nor electronic devices could ensure the public’s safety.

Contributing: Eric Seals and M.L. Elrick, Detroit Free Press; Carolyn Muyskens and Arpan Lobo, Holland Sentinel

Colo. wildfire ‘just exploded’

CalWood blaze drives 3,000 people from homes

John Bacon
USA TODAY

A Colorado wildfire had raced through more than 8,700 parched, wind-blown acres in less than 24 hours on Sunday, forcing evacuation of almost 3,000 people in Boulder County as wildfires continued to batter the state and the West.

The CalWood fire began burning Saturday in Boulder County, about 50 miles southeast of the Cameron Peak Fire. That fire, the largest in state history, has burned more than 300 square miles since mid-August.

“It just exploded,” Mike Wagner, division chief with the Boulder County Sheriff’s Office, said of the CalWood fire. “We do believe multiple homes were probably lost. It’s still too dynamic to get in and begin to assess.”

Courtney Walsh posted three pictures of her burned-out, Boulder area home on social media.

“It’s all gone,” she tweeted.

Jessica Newmans posted an offer to house animals in her barn or contained pasture after her property was removed from the evacuation zone.

“One of the first things we grabbed



Smoke billows from the Cameron Peak Fire in northern Colorado last week. THORNTON STREETEER/AP

before mandatory evacuations hit? Our ballots,” she tweeted. “Then our children & dog, guitar, and a few nice bottles of wine, of course.”

The causes of both fires remain under investigation. Wagner said there had been no lightning strikes or other likely weather events that could have ignited the CalWood blaze. But the region has

been saddled with high winds and what fire officials termed “critically dry” conditions for weeks.

“Anyone under an Evacuation WARNING for #CalWoodFire should be ready to leave immediately,” the Boulder Office of Emergency Management said on social media. “Have a bag packed & be ready to leave with very little notice. Winds on Sunday could create fast-moving fire activity.”

Wagner said efforts to combat the blaze were constrained by the weather and the lack of firefighters because of demand throughout the West. More than 60 major fires were burning in 11 Western states, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.

“We’ve been concerned for some time about the fire danger,” Wagner said. “It has been so dry.”

The Cameron Peak fire, 62% contained Sunday, has burned more than 100 structures. The wildfire started in the high country 30 miles west of Fort Collins and continued to grow despite more than 1 foot of snow that fell on Labor Day. It broke the state’s record for the largest fire last week, fanned by days of high winds.

California got a trace of good news. The White House and the Federal Emergency Management Agency approved the state’s request for disaster relief funds to clean up from six fires.

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GOP senators distance from Trump

Republicans, wanting to keep power, on tightrope

Phillip M. Bailey and Ledyard King
USA TODAY

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell continues to drift away from President Donald Trump in the final weeks of the 2020 election even as the pair barrel toward filling a third U.S. Supreme Court seat.

McConnell speculated last week about the time period after Judge Amy Coney Barrett’s expected confirmation later this month when the GOP might face a 2021 fight against possible Democratic efforts to “pack the court” with more justices should former Vice President Joe Biden win the White House.

“Believe me, they’ll do it if they can,” McConnell told reporters when voting early in Kentucky on Thursday. “If I’m the majority leader, it will not come up.”

The comment underscored how he views the GOP-controlled Senate as a last line of defense, according to those within his advisory orbit.

At the same time, a Biden presidency represents a chance at a final and larger legacy that could spawn major bipartisan deals.

“It’s not like Biden can’t do business with a Republican Senate,” a GOP strategist who is working closely with McConnell in 2020, told USA TODAY. “In fact there’s a track record of him being able to do that with McConnell.”

Of course, that’s if Republicans, who hold a 53-47 edge in the Senate, can hold onto the chamber.

Recent polls and independent analyses show Democrats with a better than 50-50 chance of flipping the necessary number of seats (three if Biden wins, four if Trump does) to retake the upper chamber.

Jessica Taylor of the nonpartisan Cook Political Report said Democrats are “the clear favorite” to win back the Senate. And a GOP strategist who focuses on congressional races called the political environment “very difficult ... across the map” for Republicans due to years of Trump’s tweets, his behavior and, more recently, his widely panned



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has signaled lately that he's not joined at the hip with President Donald Trump. MANDEL NGAN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

debate performance late last month.

McConnell is adept at giving subtle signals as much as following the political winds, and lately that has meant showing that he isn’t joined at the hip to the president, such as when he called out the White House for its lax COVID-19 restrictions.

During the lone debate against Amy McGrath, his 2020 Democratic challenger, McConnell at several times shouted out Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, who has a tense relationship with Trump and his base.

Spokesman David Popp said in an email Thursday that political observers shouldn’t read much into those comments, but others close to McConnell say he is aware of a 2020 electoral canyon for Republicans.

“A lot of our people who are suburban Republican voters aren’t huge Trump fans and they aren’t turned off by Biden in the way they may have been by Hillary Clinton,” the McConnell source said. “Remember, the economy benefits from stability in Washington so they’re making a vote for stability in this country. But also they don’t want to trade four years of Trump craziness for four years of socialist craziness.”

Escaping the president’s shadow

With Election Day less than three weeks away, McConnell and other Senate Republicans have taken more deliberate steps to distance themselves from Trump.

The majority leader said recently he hadn’t been to the White House for weeks because of lax coronavirus protocols, a revelation that seemed to undercut the president’s message that he deserves “an A-plus” for his handling of the pandemic.

It’s a balancing act for Republican Senate candidates running for reelection in battleground states who need the GOP base to win as well as a significant share of independents who may be turned off by Trump’s rhetoric, behavior and policies.

Lately, they’ve been trying to escape the president’s shadow.

Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., is trying to win a second term in a state Trump won in 2016 by nearly 4 percentage points but where polls showed the president now trailing Biden by a similar margin.

So it was not unusual to see Tillis recently try to appeal to both groups recently, said Taylor who analyzes Senate races for the Cook Political Report.

He was quick out of the gate to back Trump’s move to fill the Supreme Court vacancy created by the death last month of Ruth Bader Ginsburg seat.

Then, last week, the Tar Heel state Republican threw shade on the president by telling Politico he’s running to be “a check on a Biden presidency.”

When Sen. Martha McSally of Arizona was asked during an debate with Democratic challenger Mark Kelly whether she was “proud of her support for President Trump,” she responded she was “proud that I’m fighting for Arizonans.” And in Texas, Sen. John Cornyn, the Republican majority whip, told the Houston Chronicle that Trump had “let his guard down” on the coronavirus and that the president’s rhetoric has created “confusion” that has hurt efforts to confront the pandemic.

McConnell helps GOP on tightrope

McConnell looked to give GOP colleagues a way out when he announced the Senate’s schedule was shifting.

Lawmakers, he said, are returning to Washington to take up a \$500 billion relief bill that seems to be a guaranteed dead on arrival proposal for House Democrats, who have held fast to their \$2.2 trillion proposal.

The timing of the GOP bill came a day after McConnell was criticized by McGrath, his Democratic challenger, about the results of his influence amid the coronavirus pandemic during Monday’s debate.

McConnell is leading McGrath by double digits in most polls, but his GOP colleagues face a tougher road ahead that could cost the party its majority in the Senate. Passing a new COVID-19 aid package would give them something to spotlight as the pandemic continues to batter the U.S. economy.

But Trump immediately undercut McConnell’s relief proposal, writing on Twitter that any stimulus to deal with COVID-19 must: “Go big or go home!!!”

McConnell threw cold water on the president’s call for a costlier aid package, however, telling reporters in Kentucky that Trump is “talking about a much larger amount than I can sell to my members.”

Contributing: Savannah Behrmann

What we know about NY Post’s Hunter Biden story

Caren Bohan, Kevin Johnson, Matthew Brown and Jeff Neiburg
USA TODAY

When the New York Post published the alleged contents of a computer hard drive purporting to document the Ukrainian and Chinese business activities of Hunter Biden, the newspaper cast the information as a “smoking gun.”

Enter the FBI.

Federal authorities are investigating whether the material supplied to the Post by Rudy Giuliani, President Donald Trump’s personal lawyer, is part of a smoke bomb of disinformation pushed by Russia.

The inquiry, according to a person familiar with the matter, is at least in part aimed at determining whether Russia has set its sights on a familiar target: Biden’s father, Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden. The person is not authorized to comment on the matter publicly and asked not to be named in order to speak candidly.

The FBI has declined to comment.

The gauzy details of the newspaper’s account trace the hard drive to a computer repair shop in Delaware, where a laptop had been left for service last year but was never reclaimed by the customer. Exactly how the material moved to Giuliani has raised as many questions as the authenticity of the laptop data the president’s lawyer provided to the newspaper.

After months of investigation, two Republican-led Senate committees unveiled a report in September that found no evidence of wrongdoing or corrupt actions by the former vice president in connection with his son Hunter’s business dealings in Ukraine.

But Trump and Giuliani have continued to lob allegations at the Democratic nominee, despite multiple investigations, including the recent GOP probes, that had found no basis for the claims.

On Wednesday, the president and his lawyer seized on the New York Post story, which focused on an email purporting to show an adviser to the Ukrainian



Hunter Biden with his father, former Vice President Joe Biden. Former Joe Biden aides have suggested Russians are behind the story. NICK WASS/AP

energy company Burisma thanking Hunter Biden for arranging a meeting for him with Joe Biden, who was then the vice president.

The story provided no evidence that such a meeting ever occurred and has come under fire for its reliance on questionable sources and documents whose authenticity was not verified. Biden’s campaign team told USA TODAY that no meeting ever occurred.

Giuliani, through his lawyer, declined to provide the material to USA TODAY for examination.

What are the claims about Biden?

The effort by Trump and Giuliani to dig up dirt on Biden and Ukraine was at the center of the impeachment inquiry.

The Democratic-controlled House last year approved two articles of impeachment. The probe was set off by a whistleblower complaint accusing Trump of using the levers of diplomacy to try to cajole Ukraine into pursuing investigations of Biden.

Multiple senior Trump administration officials testified that they became alarmed about a July 2019 call the president had with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in which he urged his counterpart to announce an investigation. Administration officials also testified of concerns that Giuliani was carrying out a “shadow diplomacy” in Ukraine focused on pressuring officials to

investigate Trump’s political rivals.

The GOP-controlled Senate acquitted Trump of the charges after a trial.

Trump and Giuliani have accused Joe Biden of seeking the ouster of Ukrainian prosecutor Viktor Shokin to thwart an investigation of Burisma – a claim that independent fact checkers and investigators have debunked. Shokin was widely viewed by international organizations such as the European Union and anti-corruption investigators in Ukraine, as an impediment to reforming the country’s culture of graft.

Biden helped to oust Shokin because the prosecutor was not pursuing corruption cases. There is no evidence of wrongdoing by Hunter Biden.

An examination by PolitiFact in 2019 said there was “no evidence to support the idea that Joe Biden advocated with his son’s interests in mind. ... It’s not even clear that (Burisma) was actively under investigation or that a change in prosecutors benefited it.”

Last month, the two Republican-led Senate committees investigating the claims said in an 87-page report that Hunter Biden’s role on the Burisma board was “problematic” but said it was “unclear” whether it ever affected U.S. foreign policy under the Obama administration.

What did the Post report say?

The New York Post reported on unverified documents that were based on what it called a “massive trove” of data from a laptop computer. The newspaper said the data were provided by Giuliani and former White House adviser Steve Bannon.

The central claim of the documents is unclear. The article references an email from Vadym Pozharskyi, an adviser to Burisma, in which he thanks Hunter Biden for “giving an opportunity to meet your father and spent (sic) some time together.”

The wording of the email leaves unclear whether Pozharskyi was referring to a past encounter or one he hoped to have in the future. There is also no evidence in the published documents that a meeting happened.

The newspaper characterized the

documents as undercutting Biden’s previous claims that he never spoke to Hunter about his son’s dealings in Ukraine. But the Biden campaign categorically denied a meeting ever occurred between Joe Biden and Pozharskyi.

The Post said the data it received were discovered on the hard drive of a laptop taken to a repair shop in Joe Biden’s home state of Delaware. In the newspaper’s coverage, the emails are shared as image files, not in a file format that would contain header information and metadata. That makes it harder to analyze and verify the files.

The laptop was allegedly dropped off at the Delaware repair shop but never retrieved. The Post said the store owner then copied the documents on the device’s hard drive and sent them to Giuliani’s lawyer, Robert Costello.

Former White House aide Bannon later told the New York Post about the existence of the documents. Giuliani provided the documents to the tabloid.

The article also claimed the FBI seized the laptop for an inquiry.

‘Hallmarks’ of disinformation?

The story prompted some to draw parallels to the runup to the 2016 election, when emails from the Democratic National Committee were hacked by Russian-affiliated operatives and released by WikiLeaks. Some experts say the story has many hallmarks of a disinformation campaign.

“It is also an old Cold War disinformation tactic to pass information, especially but not exclusively when forged, to low-brow newspapers that have high circulation and low standards of investigation,” tweeted Thomas Rid, a political scientist at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

Former Biden aides have also suggested that Russians are behind it.

“This is a Russian disinformation operation,” Michael Carpenter, a former deputy assistant secretary of defense who now heads the Penn Biden Center, said to Politico. “I’m very comfortable saying that.”

Contributing: John Fritze, Courtney Subramanian and David Jackson

ELECTION 2020

Ads

Continued from Page 1A

also battlegrounds. Since Sept. 28, the top six markets have been:

- Tampa, where viewers saw 9,177 ads for \$9 million. Biden was supported by 6,580 ads and Trump by 2,597 ads.
- Orlando, where viewers saw 8,781 ads for \$10.7 million. Biden was supported by 6,079 ads and Trump by 2,702 ads.
- Miami, where viewers saw 8,128 ads for \$10.8 million. Biden was supported by 5,737 ads and Trump by 2,391 ads.
- Philadelphia, where viewers saw 7,118 ads for \$8.8 million. Biden was supported by 5,581 ads and Trump by 1,537 ads.
- Phoenix, where viewers saw 6,866 ads for \$10.9 million. Biden was supported by 3,710 ads and Trump by 3,156 ads.
- Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where viewers saw 5,527 ads for \$4 million. Biden was supported by 3,881 ads and Trump by 1,646 ads.

The Sunshine State is a melting pot, where the campaigns can test their messaging. Biden has focused on the Trump administration’s response to COVID-19 and health care. He warns about Trump being a threat to Social Security and Medicare. Trump compared the economic recovery to his own recovery from the virus and warned that Biden would be a puppet of the radical left, threatening Second Amendment rights and raising taxes. “If you want a lesson in micro-targeting of TV ads, just spend a day in these two markets,” MacManus said of Tampa and Orlando. “Age targeting. Gender targeting. Issue targeting. It’s pinpointed here.”

The 2020 campaign is projected to spend a record-setting \$11 billion – about 50% more than in 2016 when accounting for inflation, according to the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics.

Presidential ads don’t dictate who wins. Trump was vastly outspent in 2016 and still beat Democrat Hillary Clinton. Special-interest groups can outspend the candidates.

Biden’s record-setting fundraising has outpaced Trump’s down the final stretch, which allows the challenger to run more ads in more states than the incumbent. Through Aug. 31, Biden’s campaign raised \$540 million and Trump’s campaign raised \$476 million, according to the Federal Election Commission. The difference is starker when combined with the national party committees. During August, Biden and the Democratic National Committee raised a record \$365 million; Trump and the Republican National Committee raised \$210 million.

Biden announced he raised an additional \$383 million in September, and Trump hasn’t reported his figure.

The fundraising advantage allowed Biden’s campaign to buy twice as many television ads in battlegrounds and outspend Trump’s campaign nationwide.

Biden has spent \$223 million airing television ads 356,366 times since April 9, according to the Wesleyan Media Project. Trump spent \$161 million on 261,633 airings during the same period, the study found.

During September, Biden spent \$153 million on television and radio ads, nearly tripling Trump’s \$57 million, according to the tracking firm Advertising Analytics. Outside groups narrowed the difference to \$189 million supporting Biden and \$127 million supporting Trump, according to Advertising Analytics.

From Sept. 28 through Oct. 11, Biden’s campaign spent nearly \$56 million to air television ads 80,000 times while Trump’s campaign spent nearly \$32 million to air ads 32,000 times, according to the Wesleyan Media Project.

“Although the impact of ads in presidential races tends to be fairly small, Biden’s consistent ad advantages of two-to-one or even three-to-one in the battleground states has to account for at least some of his expanding lead in the polls over the past few weeks,” said Travis Ridout, co-director of the Wesleyan Media Project.

Trump has outpaced Biden in on-line ads, although Biden is catching up. Trump has spent \$165.8 million on ads on Facebook and Google since mid-April and \$33.8 million since late September, according to the Wesleyan study. Biden spent \$130.1 million on online ads since mid-April and \$34.7 million since late September.

States enact plans to ensure safety of ballots

47 states, DC let you track your ballot status

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USA TODAY NETWORK

Virginia Goldberg of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, was willing to wait for her election ballot to show up in the mail.

She doesn’t feel safe going to the polls this year because of health concerns and the pandemic. She is hopeful the absentee ballot system is going to work.

“I wish people would not give in to the fear mongering and do what is best for them – and democracy,” she said.

Goldberg is far from alone, both in her hopes of a fair election count and in casting her ballot through the mail.

Election boards across states vow they are taking steps to ensure all votes are accurately counted, pointing to laws and regulations they must follow. But this year is, of course, more complicated than most: It is a presidential election year and more people will be voting by mail than ever before due to the pandemic.

Elections officials also will have to beat back claims, even from President Donald Trump, that the votes will be compromised.

A review by the USA TODAY Network Atlantic Group found a mix of protocols taken by New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware to deal with the surge in mail-in voting. That includes ensuring drop boxes are secure, allowing voters who make mistakes to quickly fix them and doing an expedient count of absentee ballots before and/or after Election Day to limit prolonged uncertainty.

What ballots will be counted?

There is reason to be careful with your mail-in ballots.

While complaints by Trump that mail-in balloting is rigged have been largely unfounded, USA TODAY predicted that if half of the country were to vote by mail this year, it could lead to 1 million votes being rejected or discarded for a variety of mistakes. Those are the same issues that local election boards are hoping to guard against. And there have been some



Nineteen states allow elections officials to notify voters if problems are discovered with their ballots and offer an opportunity to fix them, according to Votingrightslab.org. JOHN MEORE/USA TODAY NETWORK

hiccups.

In Luzerne County, Pennsylvania., a temporary worker recently tossed some military and overseas ballots into the trash. A federal investigation is ongoing, but Pennsylvania Department of State officials say it appears to have been “a bad error” – not intentional fraud.

In New York, a Rochester printer sent out 100,000 absentee ballots mainly to New York City that some had incorrect names on return envelopes. It had to send out a whole new batch.

But experts said those mishaps are small and shouldn’t impact voters’ confidence in the election system.

In Pennsylvania, a key battleground, nearly 3 million mail-in ballots are expected to be cast for Nov. 3, said Terry Madonna, a political analyst at Franklin & Marshall College. But a recent poll showed the majority of voters are still expected to head to the polls. So the election has multifaceted challenges: Election officials have to make sure there is enough staff to handle in-person voting and enough to handle absentee ballots.

In Maryland, ballot counting takes place in a secure room, and the ballot-scanning machines are shut down and sealed to prevent tampering after each day of canvassing.

David Garreis, the president of the Maryland Association of Election Officials, said election results will only be accessible to a small number of workers

and will be stored electronically in the voting machines, which are sealed.

How will votes be kept secure

Nineteen states allow election officials to notify voters if problems occur with their ballots and offer an opportunity to fix them, according to Votingrightslab.org.

In New York, a settlement between the state and the League of Women Voters requires counties to allow voters to fix certain mistakes before ballots are counted. “If there’s an issue with your signature or you didn’t seal your inner envelope or if you forgot to sign, those are all now curable issues in New York state,” said Jennifer Wilson, deputy director of the league’s New York chapter.

In New Jersey, if a ballot is found to be defective, such as a voter not signing the certification, election officials must notify the voter of the error and send them another ballot to fill out.

In Pennsylvania, “naked ballots” without the secrecy envelope returned will not be counted.

Forty-seven states and the District of Columbia have online portals that allow voters to track the status of their ballots. Some states, though, admit they are entering a system they are not used to.

New Jerseyans will vote almost entirely by mail for the first time in a general election. The state set up drop boxes to place them.

Undecided

Continued from Page 1A

back memories from 2016 when Democrat Hillary Clinton led in polls three weeks from Election Day, before Trump’s victory. Trump faces a problem unlike four years ago: The majority of voters – 95% or higher in most polls – say they have already decided who they back and can’t be persuaded.

Adding to the troubles for the president: More than 26 million people have voted early, and Democrats have a major advantage in mail-in voting.

“I think it’s vitally important that the current president move out of the White House and on to his business practices,” said Bob Lowe, 72, a retired superintendent from Le Center, Minnesota, who voted for Biden after backing Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson in 2016.

Lowe, a political independent, is “not enamored by either candidate” but called Trump’s response to the coronavirus pandemic “nothing short of abysmal” and said his “personality, actions and behaviors demean the office of the president of the United States.” He said he made up his mind in August: “I think the lines have been drawn, perhaps for some time.”

Biden polling above 50%

There are fewer undecided voters in this year’s election and not as many considering a third-party candidate. Biden consistently wins support in polls from more than 50% of voters, while Clinton typically polled in the high- or mid-40s in October before the 2016 election.

Strong opinions about Trump after his four years in the White House have

proved challenging for the president. Biden lacks the high negative marks that Clinton did. It has made for a stable race with little tightening in polls compared with past elections. Trump has not led in the Real Clear Politics’ average of national polls since Biden became the Democratic nominee in August. Biden’s lowest mark has been 48.7%. Trump’s highest has been 43.3%.

An NPR/Marist University poll released Thursday found Biden ahead of Trump 54%-43% among likely voters. Only 2% say they are unsure whom they will vote for, and 1% say they back a third-party candidate. Only 5% of voters say they could be persuaded to change their opinions.

“There’s very few people who are looking over the choices right now,” said Lee Miringoff, director of the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “That makes it very uphill for the president. It’s a very steep incline for him. People are comparing it to 2016, but I think it’s a very false comparison.”

In the Real Clear Politics average of national polls, Biden held a 51.3%-42.3% lead over Trump among likely voters as of Saturday. Trump was at roughly that same position in 2016, 42.2%, but Clinton’s polling average was lower than Biden’s, at 47.7%.

The percentage of undecided voters in October polls four years ago generally ranged from 4% to 9%.

Clinton and Trump received sizable bounces after their party’s conventions. Trump captured the lead in late July. In the last month of the race, Clinton got a boost after the release of Trump’s “Access Hollywood” recording – in which he made vulgar comments about women – followed by a bounce for Trump after FBI Director James Comey announced an investigation into emails on Clinton’s personal server.

In addition to more undecided voters

in 2016, more voters were willing to vote for Johnson and Green Party nominee Jill Stein. Johnson finished with 3.3% of the vote and Stein 1.1%, enough to be a factor in several battleground states that Trump won by narrow margins.

This year’s third-party candidates – Libertarian Jo Jorgensen, Green Party candidate Howie Hawkins and rapper Kanye West – barely register in most polls and won’t be on every state ballot.

David Paleologos, director of the Suffolk University Political Research Center, said Biden has not become polarizing like Clinton and Trump. Paleologos said many voters disliked Clinton “with a higher intensity” than they disliked Trump. “This time, you don’t have that,” he said. “You certainly have a negative on Trump, people who feel unfavorable to him, but it’s not matched to an unfavorable for Biden. There’s less interest in waffling. And there’s less interest in voting for a third-party candidate.”

‘A long way to go’

Biden campaign manager Jen O’Malley Dillon sought to dispel any complacency and early celebrating among the left last week.

“There is still a long way to go in this campaign, and we think this race is far closer than folks on this website think,” she wrote on Twitter. “Like a lot closer.”

Trump won many late-breaking voters in 2016, but this year, he’s struggled to keep his coalition intact.

Mike Loewenstein, 72, a self-described moderate conservative from Ocala, Florida – a retiree-heavy community where Trump campaigned Friday – voted for Trump four years ago. He has second thoughts about doing so this year, arguing Trump “blew his leadership role” addressing the pandemic. “A national emergency of that size, he blew it as a leader. He blew it politically.”

ELECTION 2020

Election officials preparing for voter intimidation

States say they won't tolerate any suppression

Matt Vasilogambros and Carrie Levine
Pew/Stataline

Election officials across the country have begun reviewing security plans at early and Election Day voting sites, strengthening ties with local law enforcement and training poll workers to prepare for voter intimidation tactics.

Even before the presidential debate, when President Donald Trump urged his supporters to “go into the polls and watch very carefully,” Michelle Wilcox, the director of elections in Auglaize County, Ohio, was concerned about disruptions at the polls this year.

The rural county near the Indiana border seems like an unlikely candidate for trouble. It has about 32,500 voters, two-thirds of whom are registered as unaffiliated and another fourth of whom are Republican. But even in this small rural county, Wilcox said, she will be prepared.

For the first time, she brought in the sheriff to help train poll workers. Wilcox said she and the sheriff talked to poll workers about situations that could come up and how to handle them. For example, she said, the sheriff would get involved in a case of disorderly conduct but is “not the arresting authority if somebody doesn’t have a mask on.”

“Our poll workers listened very in-



Election officials across the country are stressing buffer zones that prohibit electioneering within a certain distance of polling sites. BEN GRAY/AP

tently,” she said. “They know that there may be some issues.”

Since the Sept. 29 presidential debate, there has been surging concern over the prospect of voter harassment at the polls. But before Trump’s poll-watching invitation to a national television audience, there were incidents.

Philadelphia officials last month turned away a group of poll watchers sent by the Trump campaign to satellite election sites, where they are not permitted entry under Pennsylvania law. In Virginia, Trump supporters temporarily blocked an entrance to an early voting site last month, forcing officials to offer voters escorts to cast ballots. And in Minnesota, a private security company is recruiting former military members to

guard polling places, alarming election officials with the prospect of unofficial armed guards who could intimidate or harass voters. Many voting experts say these actions are not legal.

Poll watching or poll observing has long been a way for parties and outside groups to monitor voting, but such observers typically have to be certified in advance, and detailed rules vary from state to state.

Pennsylvania last week issued updated guidance. In late September, the Ohio secretary of state’s office put out a new training video on de-escalation at the polls. North Carolina put out new guidance to county election boards on allowable conduct. “It is not appropriate or permissible for law enforcement or private security to be stationed at a voting place,” the North Carolina memo warns in bolded text.

At the same time, election officials are trying to reassure worried voters that polling places will be safe.

“We have a strict and strong plan of protection in place, but we’re also being very, very mindful of making sure no voter is fearful of showing up, and communicating to them we’ve got this,” said Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat, in response to a question during a press call last week. “We’ll protect them, we’ll protect their right to vote, and we’ll use every resource and tool at our disposal in order to do so.”

On a separate press call, Ohio Secre-

tary of State Frank LaRose, a Republican, pointed out state law prohibits impeding voters or poll workers. “We will not in any way tolerate any kind of intimidation or suppression,” he said. “The law in Ohio is very clear.”

Election officials are stressing buffer zones that prohibit electioneering within a certain distance of polling places, depending on the state. The Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection, based at the Georgetown University Law Center, issued fact sheets for each state explaining what to do if armed individuals are near a polling site.

Rural voters may be more vulnerable to harassment because “issues can pop up and they’re not going to be as documented,” said Aunna Dennis, executive director of Common Cause Georgia, who said she is monitoring efforts by groups in north and south Georgia to recruit potentially armed “concerned citizens” to watch the polls.

The Trump campaign set a goal of recruiting 50,000 poll watchers and has said they will abide by the law. “Poll watchers are critical to ensuring the fairness of any election, and President Trump’s volunteer poll watchers will be trained to ensure all rules are applied equally, all valid ballots are counted, and all Democrat rule breaking is called out,” said Thea McDonald, campaign deputy national press secretary.

This story is from Stataline, an initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts.

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IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, HOUSTON DIVISION
In re: LONESTAR RESOURCES US INC., et al., Chapter 11
Debtor(s) (Jointly Administered)

NOTICE OF (I) COMMENCEMENT OF CHAPTER 11 BANKRUPTCY CASES, (II) COMBINED HEARING ON DISCLOSURE STATEMENT AND CONFIRMATION OF JOINT PREPACKAGED CHAPTER 11 PLAN, AND (III) OBJECTION AND VOTING DEADLINES, AND SUMMARY OF DEBTORS' JOINT PREPACKAGED CHAPTER 11 PLAN TO: ALL HOLDERS OF CLAIMS AGAINST, AND EQUITY INTERESTS IN, LONESTAR RESOURCES US INC. AND ITS AFFILIATED DEBTORS AND DEBTORS-IN-POSSESSION AND ALL OTHER PARTIES IN INTEREST IN THE ABOVE CAPTIONED CHAPTER 11 CASES

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE THAT on September 30, 2020 (the “**Petition Date**”), Lonestar Resources US Inc. and its affiliated debtors, as debtors and debtors in possession (collectively, the “**Debtors**”), each commenced a case under Chapter 11 of title 11 of the United States Code (the “**Bankruptcy Code**”) in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Texas (the “**Bankruptcy Court**”).

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT on October 1, 2020, the Bankruptcy Court entered an order (Docket No. 83) conditionally approving the *Disclosure Statement for Joint Prepackaged Plan of Reorganization for Lonestar Resources US Inc. and Its Affiliate Debtors Under Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code* (as may be amended, modified, or supplemented from time to time, the “**Disclosure Statement**”) (Docket No. 28).

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT on September 28, 2020, prior to the Petition Date, the Debtors commenced solicitation of votes on the Plan (as defined below) from Holders of Claims and Equity Interests in Class 4 (Prepetition RBL Claims), Class 5 (Prepetition Notes Claims), and Class 8 (Old Parent Preferred Interests) of record as of September 28, 2020 (the “**Prepetition Voting Record Date**”).

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT the Debtors now intend to solicit votes from Holders of Equity Interests in Class 9 (Old Parent Common Interests) of record as of October 1, 2020 (the “**Postpetition Voting Record Date**”).

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT a hearing (the “**Combined Hearing**”) is scheduled for November 9, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. (Prevailing Central Time) to consider approval of the *Disclosure Statement* and confirmation of the *Joint Prepackaged Plan of Reorganization for Lonestar Resources US Inc. and Its Affiliate Debtors Under Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code* (as may be amended, modified, or supplemented from time to time, the “**Plan**”). The Combined Hearing will take place in Courtroom 400, 4th Floor, 515 Rusk Street, Houston, TX 77002 or via videoconference, if necessary. The Combined Hearing may be continued from time to time by the Bankruptcy Court or the Debtors without further notice other than by such adjournment being announced in open court or by a notice of adjournment filed with the Bankruptcy Court and served on such parties as the Bankruptcy Court may order. Moreover, subject to the terms of the Restructuring Support Agreement, the Plan may be modified or amended, if necessary, pursuant to section 1127 of the Bankruptcy Code, prior to, during, or as a result of the Combined Hearing, without further notice to parties in interest.

Only Holders of Claims in Class 4 and Class 5 and Holders of Equity Interests in Class 8 and Class 9 are entitled to vote to accept or reject the Plan. All other Classes of Claims and Equity Interests are deemed to accept the Plan and, therefore, are not entitled to vote.

VOTING DEADLINE. The deadline for the submission of votes for Holders of Claims and Equity Interests in Class 4, Class 5, Class 8, or Class 9 to accept or reject the Plan is November 3, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. (Prevailing Central Time) (the “**Voting Deadline**”).

CRITICAL INFORMATION REGARDING VOTING ON THE PLAN

1. On the Petition Date, the Debtors filed the Plan and Disclosure Statement pursuant to sections 1125 and 1126(b) of the Bankruptcy Code. Copies of the Plan and the Disclosure Statement may be obtained free of charge by visiting the website maintained by the Debtors’ solicitation agent, Prime Clerk LLC (the “**Solicitation Agent**”), at the following website: <http://cases.primclerk.com/lonestar>. Copies of the Plan and Disclosure Statement may also be obtained by calling the Solicitation Agent at (877) 470-3035 (domestic, toll free) or (347) 897-4060 (local/international, toll) or by sending an electronic mail message to lonestarinfo@primclerk.com with “Lonestar” in the subject line.

2. In accordance with sections 1122 and 1123 of the Bankruptcy Code, the Plan contemplates classifying Holders of Claims and Equity Interests into various Classes for all purposes, including with respect to voting on the Plan, as follows:

Class	Claim/Equity Interest	Status	Voting Rights
1.	Other Priority Claims	Unimpaired	Deemed to Accept
2.	Other Secured Claims	Unimpaired	Deemed to Accept
3.	Secured Tax Claims	Unimpaired	Deemed to Accept
4.	Prepetition RBL Claims	Impaired	Entitled to Vote
5.	Old Parent Notes Claims	Impaired	Entitled to Vote
6.	General Unsecured Claims	Unimpaired	Deemed to Accept
7.	Intercompany Claims	Impaired	Deemed to Accept
8.	Old Parent Preferred Interests	Impaired	Entitled to Vote
9.	Old Parent Common Interests	Impaired	Entitled to Vote
10.	Old Lonestar Subsidiary Interests	Unimpaired	Deemed to Accept

3. **Plan Treatment.** Article III of the Plan sets forth the treatment to be provided to each Class of Claims and Equity Interests under the Plan.

4. **Prepetition Voting Record Date.** The Prepetition Voting Record Date is September 28, 2020. The Prepetition Voting Record Date is the date by which it was determined which Holders of Claims and Equity Interests in Class 4, Class 5 and Class 8 are entitled to vote on the Plan.

5. **Postpetition Voting Record Date.** The Postpetition Voting Record Date is October 1, 2020. The Postpetition Voting Record Date is the date by which it will be determined which Holders of Old Parent Common Interests in Class 9 are entitled to vote on the Plan.

6. **Voting Deadline.** The Voting Deadline for voting on the Plan is 5:00 p.m. prevailing Central Time on November 3, 2020. If you held a Claim against or an Equity Interest in one or more of the Debtors as of the Prepetition Voting Record Date or, in the case of Class 9 Equity Interests, the Postpetition Voting Record Date, and are entitled to vote to accept or reject the Plan, you should have received the applicable Ballot and corresponding voting instructions. For your vote to be counted, you must: (a) follow such voting instructions carefully; (b) complete all the required information on the applicable Ballot; and (c) sign, date and return your completed Ballot so that it is **actually received** by the Solicitation Agent according to and as set

forth in detail in the voting instructions on or before the Voting Deadline. If you are instructed to return your Beneficial Holder Ballot to your Nominee, you must submit your completed Ballot to your Nominee in enough time for your Nominee to send a Master Ballot recording your vote to the Solicitation Agent by the Voting Deadline. A failure to follow such instructions may disqualify your vote.

CRITICAL INFORMATION REGARDING OBJECTING TO THE PLAN. ARTICLE X OF THE PLAN CONTAINS RELEASE, EXCULPATION AND INJUNCTION PROVISIONS. THUS, YOU ARE ADVISED TO REVIEW AND CONSIDER THE PLAN CAREFULLY BECAUSE YOUR RIGHTS MIGHT BE AFFECTED THEREUNDER.

7. **Plan Objection Deadline.** The deadline for filing objections to the Plan is November 3, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. prevailing Central Time (the “**Objection Deadline**”).

8. **Objections to the Plan.** Any objection to the Plan must: (i) be in writing; (ii) conform to the Bankruptcy Rules and the Local Rules; (iii) state the name and address of the objecting party and the amount and nature of the Claim or Equity Interest held by such Entity (as defined in section 101(15) of the Bankruptcy Code); (iv) state with particularity the basis and nature of any objection to the Plan and, if practicable, a proposed modification to the Plan that would resolve such objection; and (v) be filed, contemporaneously with a proof of service, with the Bankruptcy Court and served so that it is **actually received** no later than the Objection Deadline by the parties listed below (the “**Notice Parties**”). CONFIRMATION OBJECTIONS NOT TIMELY FILED AND SERVED IN THE MANNER SET FORTH HEREIN MAY NOT BE CONSIDERED BY THE BANKRUPTCY COURT AND MAY BE OVERRULED WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE.

9. **Notice Parties.** The Notice Parties include: (a) counsel to the Debtors: Latham & Watkins LLP, 285 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022 (Attn: David A. Hammerman and Annemarie V. Reilly) (david.hammerman@lw.com) and annemarie.reilly@lw.com) and Andrew Andrews Kurth LLP, 600 Travis Street, Suite 4200, Houston, TX (Attn: Timothy A. Davidson II and Ashley L. Harper) (TadDavidson@HunttonAK.com) and AshleyHarper@HunttonAK.com); (b) counsel to the agent for the Debtors’ prepetition secured revolving credit facility: (i) Linklaters LLP, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104 (Attn: Margot Schornholtz and Penelope Jensen) (margot.schornholtz@linklaters.com) and penelope.jensen@linklaters.com) and (ii) Bracewell LLP, 171 Louisiana Street, Suite 2300, Houston, TX 77002 (Attn: William A. Wood III) (treywood@bracewell.com); (c) counsel to the Ad Hoc Noteholder group: Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP, 767 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017 (Attn: Kristopher M. Hansen, Eric E. Gilad, and Jason M. Pierce) (khansen@strock.com), egilad@strock.com, and jpiere@strock.com); and Cole Schotz, P.C., 301 Commerce Street, Suite 7700, Fort Worth, Texas 76102 (Attn: Michael D. Warner) (mwarner@coleshotz.com); (d) counsel to any statutory committee appointed in these Chapter 11 Cases; and (e) the Office of the United States Trustee for the Southern District of Texas, 515 Rusk Street, Suite 3516, Houston, TX 77002 (Attn: Stephen Statham, Esq. and Hector Duran, Esq.) (stephen.statham@usdoj.gov) and hector.duran.jr@usdoj.gov).

NON-VOTING STATUS OF HOLDERS OF CERTAIN CLAIMS AND EQUITY INTERESTS

10. As set forth above, certain Holders of Claims and Equity Interests are not entitled to vote on the Plan. As a result, such parties did not receive any ballots and other related solicitation materials to vote on the Plan. The Holders of Claims in Class 6 (General Unsecured Claims), Class 2 (Other Secured Claims), Class 3 (Secured Tax Claims), Class 7 (Intercompany Claims), and Class 10 (Old Lonestar Subsidiary Interests) are Unimpaired. Pursuant to section 1126(f) of the Bankruptcy Code, the Holders of Claims or Equity Interests in each of the foregoing Classes are conclusively presumed to have accepted the Plan and, thus, are not entitled to vote.

11. Finally, while Class 7 is impaired, such holders are not entitled to vote as they are Debtors or Affiliates of Debtors and are also deemed to accept the Plan.

NOTICE REGARDING CERTAIN RELEASE, EXCULPATION AND INJUNCTION PROVISIONS IN THE PLAN. PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT THE PLAN CONTAINS CERTAIN RELEASE, EXCULPATION, AND INJUNCTION PROVISIONS, INCLUDING:

Article X.B – Release of Claims and Causes of Action

Release by the Debtors and their Estates. Pursuant to section 1123(b) and any other applicable provisions of the Bankruptcy Code, and except as otherwise expressly provided in this Plan, effective as of the Effective Date, for good and valuable consideration provided by each of the Released Parties, the adequacy and sufficiency of which is hereby confirmed, the Debtors, in their respective individual capacities and as debtors-in-possession, and on behalf of themselves and their respective Estates, including, without limitation, any successor to the Debtors or any Estate representative appointed or selected pursuant to section 1123(b)(3) of the Bankruptcy Code, and the Reorganized Debtors (collectively, the “**Debtor Releasing Parties**”) shall be deemed to have conclusively, absolutely, unconditionally, irrevocably, and forever provided a full discharge, waiver and release to each of the Released Parties (and each such Released Party so released shall be forever released, waived and discharged by the Debtor Releasing Parties) and their respective assets and properties (the “**Third Party Release**”) from any and all Claims, Causes of Action, Litigation Claims, and any other debts, obligations, rights, suits, damages, actions, remedies, and liabilities whatsoever, whether known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen, whether directly or derivatively held, existing as of the Effective Date or thereafter arising, in law, at equity or otherwise, whether for tort, contract, violations of federal or state securities laws, or otherwise, based in whole or in part upon any act or omission, transaction, or other occurrence or circumstances existing or taking place prior to or on the Effective Date arising from or related in any way in whole or in part to any of the Debtors or their Affiliates, including, without limitation, (i) the Chapter 11 Cases, the Disclosure Statement, this Plan, the Restructuring Support Agreement, the Term Sheets, the Prepetition RBL Loan Documents, the Swap Agreements (as defined in the Prepetition RBL Credit Agreement), the Prepetition Notes, the Prepetition Notes Indenture, the Exit Facilities, the Exit Facilities Loan Documents, the Postpetition Hedge Agreements, and the other Restructuring Documents, or related agreements, instruments or other documents, (v) the restructuring of Claims or Equity Interests prior to or during the Chapter 11 Cases, (vi) the purchase, sale, or rescission of the purchase or sale of any Equity Interest of the Debtors or the Reorganized Debtors, and/or (vii) the Confirmation or Consummation of this Plan or the solicitation of votes on this Plan that such Debtor Releasing Party would have been legally entitled to assert (whether individually or collectively) or that any Holder of Claim or Equity Interest or other Entity would have been legally entitled to

assert for, or on behalf or in the name of, any Debtor, its respective Estate or any Reorganized Debtor (whether directly or derivatively) against any of the Released Parties; *provided, however*, that the foregoing provisions of this Debtor Release shall not operate to waive or release (A) the rights of such Debtor Releasing Party to enforce this Plan and the contracts, instruments, releases, indentures, and other agreements and documents delivered under or in connection with this Plan (including, without limitation, the Exit Facilities Loan Documents) or assumed pursuant to this Plan or assumed pursuant to Final Order of the Bankruptcy Court and (B) claims or liabilities arising out of or relating to any act or omission of a Released Party that constitutes a criminal act, fraud, willful misconduct, or gross negligence, in each case as determined by Final Order. The foregoing release shall be effective as of the Effective Date without further notice to or order of the Bankruptcy Court, act or action under applicable law, regulation, order, or rule or the vote, consent, authorization or approval of any Person and the Confirmation Order shall permanently enjoin the commencement or prosecution by any Person or Entity, whether directly, derivatively or otherwise, of any claims, obligations, suits, judgments, damages, demands, debts, rights, Causes of Action, or liabilities released pursuant to this Debtor Release. Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing in this Article X.B shall or shall be deemed to (i) prohibit the Debtors or the Reorganized Debtors from asserting and enforcing any claims, obligations, suits, judgments, demands, debts, rights, Causes of Action, or liabilities they may have against any Person that is based upon an alleged breach of a confidentiality or non-compete obligation owed to the Debtors or the Reorganized Debtors; and/or (ii) operate as a release or waiver of any Intercompany Claims or any obligations of any Entity arising after the Effective Date under the Exit Facilities Loan Documents or the Postpetition Hedge Agreements or any document, instrument or agreement set forth in the Plan Supplement, in each case unless otherwise expressly provided for in this Plan.

Entry of the Confirmation Order shall constitute the Bankruptcy Court’s approval, pursuant to Bankruptcy Rule 119, of the Debtor Release, which includes by reference each of the related provisions and definitions contained herein, and further, shall constitute the Bankruptcy Court’s finding that the Debtor Release is: (i) in exchange for the good and valuable consideration provided by the Released Parties; (ii) a good faith settlement and compromise of the Claims released by the Debtor Release; (iii) in the best interest of the Debtors and their Estates; (iv) fair, equitable and reasonable; (v) given and made after due notice and opportunity for hearing; and (vi) a bar to any of the Debtor Releasing Parties asserting any claim or Cause of Action released pursuant to the Debtor Release.

2. **Release By Third Parties.** Except as otherwise expressly provided in this Plan, effective as of the Effective Date, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, for good and valuable consideration provided by each of the Released Parties, the adequacy and sufficiency of which is hereby confirmed, and without limiting or otherwise modifying the scope of the Debtor Release provided by the Debtor Releasing Parties above, each Non-Debtor Releasing Party shall be deemed to have conclusively, absolutely, unconditionally, irrevocably, and forever provided a full discharge, waiver and release to each of the Released Parties (and each such Released Party so released shall be forever released, waived and discharged by the Non-Debtor Releasing Parties) and their respective assets and properties (the “**Third Party Release**”) from any and all Claims, Causes of Action, Litigation Claims, and any other debts, obligations, rights, suits, damages, actions, remedies, and liabilities whatsoever, whether known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen, whether directly or derivatively held, existing as of the Effective Date or thereafter arising, in law, at equity or otherwise, whether for tort, contract, violations of federal or state securities laws, or otherwise, based in whole or in part upon any act or omission, transaction, or other occurrence or circumstances existing or taking place prior to or on the Effective Date arising from or related in any way in whole or in part to any of the Debtors or their Affiliates, including, without limitation, (i) the Chapter 11 Cases, the Disclosure Statement, this Plan, the Restructuring Support Agreement, the Term Sheets, the Prepetition RBL Loan Documents, the Swap Agreements, the Prepetition Notes, the Prepetition Notes Indenture, the Exit Facilities, the Exit Facilities Loan Documents, the Postpetition Hedge Agreements, and the other Restructuring Documents, (ii) the subject matter of, or the transactions or events giving rise to, any Claim or Equity Interest that is treated in this Plan, (iii) the business or contractual arrangements between any Debtor and any Released Parties, (iv) the negotiation, formulation or preparation of the Restructuring Support Agreement, the Term Sheets, this Plan, the Disclosure Statement, the Plan Supplement, the Exit Facilities, the Exit Facilities Loan Documents, the Postpetition Hedge Agreements, and the other Restructuring Documents, or related agreements, instruments or other documents, (v) the restructuring of Claims or Equity Interests prior to or during the Chapter 11 Cases, (vi) the purchase, sale, or rescission of the purchase or sale of any Equity Interest of the Debtors or the Reorganized Debtors, and/or (vii) the Confirmation or Consummation of this Plan or the solicitation of votes on this Plan that such Non-Debtor Releasing Party would have been legally entitled to assert (whether individually or collectively) against any of the Released Parties; *provided, however*, that the foregoing provisions of this Third Party Release shall not operate to waive or release (A) the rights of such Non-Debtor Releasing Party to enforce this Plan and the contracts, instruments, releases, indentures, and other agreements and documents delivered under or in connection with this Plan (including, without limitation, the Exit Facilities Loan Documents) or assumed pursuant to this Plan or assumed pursuant to Final Order of the Bankruptcy Court and (B) claims or liabilities arising out of or relating to any act or omission of a Released Party that constitutes a criminal act, fraud, willful misconduct, or gross negligence, in each case as determined by Final Order. The foregoing release shall be effective as of the Effective Date without further notice to or order of the Bankruptcy Court, act or action under applicable law, regulation, order, or rule or the vote, consent, authorization or approval of any Person and the Confirmation Order shall permanently enjoin the commencement or prosecution by any Person or Entity, whether directly, derivatively or otherwise, of any claims, obligations, suits, judgments, damages, demands, debts, rights, Causes of Action, or liabilities released pursuant to this Third Party Release.

Entry of the Confirmation Order shall constitute the Bankruptcy Court’s approval of the Third Party Release, which includes by reference each of the related provisions and definitions contained herein, and further, shall constitute the Bankruptcy Court’s finding that the Third Party Release is: (i) consensual; (ii) essential to confirmation of the Plan; (iii) given in exchange for substantial contribution; (iv) in exchange for the good and valuable consideration provided by the Released Parties that is important to the Plan;

(v) a good faith settlement and compromise of the Claims released by the Third Party Release; (vi) in the best interest of the Debtors and all Holders of Claims and Equity Interests; (vii) fair, equitable and reasonable; (viii) given and made after due notice and opportunity for hearing; and (ix) a bar to any of the Released Parties asserting any claim or Cause of Action released pursuant to the Third Party Release.

Article X.E – Exculpation. Effective as of the Effective Date, the Exculpated Parties shall neither have nor incur any liability to any Person or Entity for any claims or Causes of Action arising prior to or on the Effective Date for any act taken or omitted to be taken in connection with, or related to, formulating, negotiating, preparing, disseminating, implementing, administering, confirming or effecting the Confirmation or Consummation of this Plan, the Disclosure Statement, the Restructuring Documents, the Exit Facilities, the Exit Facilities Loan Documents, the Postpetition Hedge Agreements, or any contract, instrument, release or other agreement or document created or entered into in connection with this Plan, including the Restructuring Support Agreement, the Term Sheets or any other prepetition or postpetition act taken or omitted to be taken in connection with or in contemplation of the restructuring of the Debtors, the approval of the Disclosure Statement or Confirmation or Consummation of this Plan; *provided, however*, that the foregoing provisions of this exculpation shall not operate to waive or release: (i) any Causes of Action arising from willful misconduct, actual fraud, or gross negligence of such applicable Exculpated Party as determined by Final Order of the Bankruptcy Court or any other court of competent jurisdiction and/or (ii) the rights of any Person or Entity to enforce this Plan and the contracts, instruments, releases, indentures, and other agreements and documents delivered under or in connection with this Plan (including, without limitation, the Exit Facilities Loan Documents and the Postpetition Hedge Agreements) or assumed pursuant to this Plan or assumed pursuant to Final Order of the Bankruptcy Court; *provided, further*, that each Exculpated Party shall be entitled to rely upon the advice of counsel concerning its respective duties pursuant to, or in connection with, the above referenced documents, actions or inactions. The foregoing exculpation shall be effective as of the Effective Date without further notice to or order of the Bankruptcy Court, act or action under applicable law, regulation, order, or rule or the vote, consent, authorization or approval of any Person. Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing in this Article X.E shall or shall be deemed to prohibit the Debtors or the Reorganized Debtors from asserting and enforcing any claims, obligations, suits, judgments, demands, debts, rights, Causes of Action or liabilities they may have against any Person that is based upon an alleged breach of a confidentiality or non-compete obligation owed to the Debtors or the Reorganized Debtors, in each case unless otherwise expressly provided in this Plan.

Article X.G – Injunction. EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE EXPRESSLY PROVIDED IN THIS PLAN OR THE CONFIRMATION ORDER, FROM AND AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE, ALL PERSONS AND ENTITIES ARE, TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PROVIDED UNDER SECTION 524 AND OTHER APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF THE BANKRUPTCY CODE, PERMANENTLY ENJOINED FROM (I) COMMENCING OR CONTINUING, IN ANY MANNER OR IN ANY PLACE, ANY SUIT, ACTION OR OTHER PROCEEDING, (II) ENFORCING, ATTACHING, COLLECTING, OR RECOVERING IN ANY MANNER ANY JUDGMENT, AWARD, DECREE, OR ORDER; (III) CREATING, PERFECTING, OR ENFORCING ANY LIEN OR ENCUMBRANCE OF ANY KIND; (IV) ASSERTING A SETOFF OR RIGHT OF SUBROGATION OR RECOURSE OF ANY KIND; OR (V) COMMENCING OR CONTINUING IN ANY MANNER ANY ACTION OR OTHER PROCEEDING OF ANY KIND, IN EACH CASE ON ACCOUNT OF OR WITH RESPECT TO ANY CLAIM, DEMAND, LIABILITY, OBLIGATION, DEBT, RIGHT, CAUSE OF ACTION, EQUITY INTEREST, OR REMEDY RELEASED OR TO BE RELEASED, EXCULPATED OR TO BE EXCULPATED, SETTLED OR TO BE SETTLED OR DISCHARGED OR TO BE DISCHARGED PURSUANT TO THIS PLAN OR THE CONFIRMATION ORDER AGAINST ANY PERSON OR ENTITY SO RELEASED, DISCHARGED, OR EXCULPATED (OR THE PROPERTY OR ESTATE OF ANY PERSON OR ENTITY SO RELEASED, DISCHARGED, OR EXCULPATED). ALL INJUNCTIONS OR STATIS PROVIDED FOR IN THE CHAPTER 11 CASES UNDER SECTION 105 OR SECTION 562 OF THE BANKRUPTCY CODE, OR OTHERWISE, AND IN EXISTENCE ON THE CONFIRMATION DATE, SHALL REMAIN IN FULL FORCE AND EFFECT UNTIL THE EFFECTIVE DATE.

YOU ARE ADVISED AND ENCOURAGED TO CAREFULLY REVIEW AND CONSIDER THE PLAN, INCLUDING THE RELEASE, EXCULPATION AND INJUNCTION PROVISIONS, AS YOUR RIGHTS MIGHT BE AFFECTED.

SECTION 341 MEETING

12. A meeting of creditors pursuant to Section 341(a) of the Bankruptcy Code (the “**Section 341(a) Meeting**”) has been deferred. The **Section 341(a) Meeting will not be convened if the Plan is confirmed by November 27, 2020**. If the Section 341(a) Meeting will be convened, the Debtors will serve on the parties on whom it served this notice and any other parties entitled to notice pursuant to the Bankruptcy Rules, and post on the website at <http://cases.primclerk.com/lonestar> a notice of, among other things, the date, time, and place of the Section 341(a) Meeting.

1. The Debtors in these cases, along with the last four digits of each Debtor’s federal tax identification number are: Lonestar Resources US Inc. (4035), Lonestar Resources Intermediate Inc. (2449), LNR America Inc. (9396), Lonestar Resources America Inc. (5863), Amadeus Petroleum Inc. (8763), Albany Services, L.L.C. (3185), T-N-T Engineering Inc. (0348), Lonestar Resources Inc. (8204), Lonestar Operating, LLC (5228), Poplar Energy, LLC (5718), Eagleford Gas, LLC (5513), Eagleford Gas 2, LLC (0638), Eagleford Gas 3, LLC (3663), Eagleford Gas 4, LLC (8776), Eagleford Gas 5, LLC (5240), Eagleford Gas 6, LLC (4966), Eagleford Gas 7, LLC (2078), Eagleford Gas 8, LLC (7542), Eagleford Gas 10, LLC (2838), Eagleford Gas 11, LLC (5951), Lonestar BR Disposal LLC (0644), and La Salle Eagle Fort Gathering Line LLC (8877). The Debtors’ address is 111 Boland Street, Suite 300, Fort Worth, TX 76107.

2. Capitalized terms used but not defined herein shall have the meanings given to such terms in the Plan.

3. If the hearing occurs over videoconference the Court will utilize GoToMeeting for the hearing. You should download the free GoToMeeting application on each device that will be used to connect to the hearing. If you choose to connect via a web browser, available literature suggests that Chrome is the preferred browser. Please note that connecting through a browser may limit the availability of some GoToMeeting features. To connect to the hearing, you should enter the meeting code “JudgeJones”. You can also connect using the link on Judge Jones’ homepage on the Southern District of Texas website. Once connected to GoToMeeting, click the settings icon in the upper right corner and enter your name under the personal information setting. In either event, audio for the Combined Hearing will be available by using the Court’s regular dial-in number. The dial-in number is +1 (832) 917-1510. You will be responsible for your own long-distance charges. You will be asked to key in the conference room number. Judge Jones’ conference room number is 205691.

COURT FILE NO. CV-20-00647824-00CL
IN THE ONTARIO SUPERIOR COURT OF JUSTICE (COMMERCIAL LIST)
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES’ CREDITORS ARRANGEMENT ACT, R.S.C. 1985, C.36, AS AMENDED AND IN THE MATTER OF A PLAN OF COMPROMISE OR ARRANGEMENT OF HEMATITE HOLDINGS INC., HEMATITE MANUFACTURING INC., HEMATITE INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS INC., CANADIAN PAVACO INC., PAVACO HOLDINGS U.S. INC., HEMATITE, INC. AND HEMATITE AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCTS INC. (the “Hematite Group”)

NOTICE OF CLAIMS BAR DATE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to an Order of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice (Commercial List) (the “**Court**”) made October 13, 2020 (the “**Order**”), a claims procedure has been commenced for the identification, quantification, and resolution of certain claims of creditors of the Hematite Group and their respective directors and officers. Capitalized terms that are not defined herein have the meanings ascribed thereto in the Order.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that any Person that wishes to assert a Pre-Filing Claim or a D&O Claim, other than an Excluded Claim, must deliver to KPMG Inc., in its capacity as the Court-appointed monitor of the Hematite Group (the “**Monitor**”), a completed Proof of Claim form, including all relevant supporting documentation in respect of such Claim, in the manner set out in the Order, on or before the Pre-Filing Claims Bar Date.

THE PRE-FILING CLAIMS BAR DATE IS 5:00 P.M. (EASTERN TIME) ON NOVEMBER 9, 2020.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that any Person that wishes to assert a Restructuring Claim (including a D&O Restructuring Claim), other than an Excluded Claim, must deliver to the Monitor a completed Proof of Claim form, including all relevant supporting documentation in respect of such Claim, in the manner set out in the Order, on or before the Restructuring Claims Bar Date.

THE RESTRICTING CLAIMS BAR DATE IS 5:00pm (Eastern Time) on the later of the Pre-Filing Claims Bar Date, and the date that is twenty-one (21) days after the Monitor sends a Claims Package with respect to a Restructuring Claim.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Pavaco Plastics Inc. was amalgamated with Hematite Manufacturing Inc. on March 29, 2020 and any Claims against the former Pavaco Plastics Inc. must be filed against Hematite Manufacturing Inc.

THE MONITOR WILL cause Claims Packages to be sent to all known Claimants on or before October 15, 2020. Copies of the Order and the Claims Package can be found at the Monitor’s website: <http://home.kpmg.ca/hematitegroup>.

CLAIMS WHICH ARE NOT PROPERLY RECEIVED BY THE APPLICABLE CLAIMS BAR DATE WILL BE BARRED AND EXTINGUISHED FOREVER.

CREDITORS REQUIRING INFORMATION or claim documentation may contact the Monitor at the following address by prepaid registered mail, courier, personal delivery, facsimile, transmission, email or telephone: KPMG Inc., Court-appointed Monitor of the Hematite Group, Attention: Tim Montgomery, 333 Bay Street, Suite 4600, Toronto, ON, M5H 2S5, Canada, Telephone: (416) 777 3798, Email: hematitegroup@kpmg.ca

Proposed Downlisting of the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker

On 10/8/2020, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published a rule in the Federal Register proposing to downlist the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) from endangered to threatened with a 4(d) rule. The RCW is a territorial, non-migratory bird that makes its home in mature open-canopied pine forests in the southeastern U.S. It occurs in the following states: AL, AR, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TX, and VA. The bird no longer occurs in KY, MD, MO, NJ, or TN.

A comment period is open until 12/7/2020. The proposed rule, instructions on how to comment, and how to submit a request for a public hearing can be found at: www.regulations.gov. In the search box, enter docket number **FWS-R4-ES-2019-0018**.

Requests for a public hearing must be made in writing by 11/23/2020. TDD users can call 1-800-877-8339. More information is available at: <https://www.fws.gov/southeast/news/2020/09/trump-administration-proposes-downlisting-of-red-cockaded-woodpecker-under-endangered-species-act/>

For more information about how to place your ad in USA TODAY's Legal Monday feature, call:

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CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Earliest date for COVID-19 vaccine is Thanksgiving

Elizabeth Weise
USA TODAY

An open letter from the frontrunner COVID-19 vaccine producer published Friday ends any expectations a vaccine might be available before Election Day. Pfizer Inc. CEO Albert Bourla’s letter says the earliest the company could apply for authorization for its COVID-19 vaccine is the third week of November. The CEO of the other frontrunner, Moderna’s Stéphane Bancel, said at a biotechnology conference Sept. 30 that it would not have enough safety data to apply for Food and Drug Administration authorization of its vaccine until Nov. 25. The other two vaccine candidates in final stage clinical trials in the U.S.,

Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca, are on hold as possible adverse events are investigated. That means there is now no chance any vaccine could be approved before the presidential election on Nov. 3. The news lays to rest a concern brewing in the public health community for months that a vaccine might be rushed through to provide a political win for President Donald Trump. That stance shifted on Oct. 6 when the White House embraced guidelines published by the Food and Drug Administration that likely would slow approval of a coronavirus vaccine by requiring drugmakers to conduct trials for two months before requesting approval. After that shift, the only way a vac-

cine could have come about before Nov. 3 would have been if absolutely everything went right in the Pfizer vaccine trials, which are the furthest along. The timing would have been tight. The Pfizer vaccine requires two doses given 28 days apart and it launched its U.S. Phase 3 trials on July 27. The second shots would have begun on Aug. 24. Two months of follow-up after that second shot would be Oct. 23. Bourla’s letter makes clear it will take longer than that. Based on the company’s current trial enrollment and dosing pace, “we estimate we will reach this milestone in the third week of November,” he wrote. The company is “operating at the speed of science,” with safety as its No. 1

priority, he said. The news is an important step in earning back the public’s trust and confidence in the vaccine evaluation and approval process, said Dr. Kelly Moore, associate director of Immunization Education, Immunization Action Coalition. According to a poll from Informa Pharma Intelligence and research firm YouGov, 35% of Americans don’t trust how quickly the vaccine clinical trials are moving, and 23% say they don’t think pharmaceutical companies have consumers’ best interests in mind. It also will give breathing space for state and local vaccination program planners who have been racing to prepare for the day a vaccine or vaccines becomes available.

Louisiana

Continued from Page 1A

can American families moved in at a time when Black Americans faced discriminatory housing practices elsewhere but found easy access to home loans close to the plant. Today, Reserve is majority Black, surrounded by a dozen petrochemical plants that provide some jobs while also releasing potentially harmful toxins into the air: ammonia, chlorine, hydrogen cyanide, sulfuric acid, hydrochloric acid and a little-known chemical called chloroprene.

The transition of Reserve from slave plantation to toxin-choked community shows what systemic racism looks like. Its residents once worked the local sugar cane fields; now they pray for medical help as they endure high rates of cancer, respiratory illness, diabetes and kidney disease. All are preexisting conditions that render people more vulnerable to COVID-19, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Since the coronavirus emerged here in March, St. John the Baptist Parish, which includes Reserve, has consistently ranked among the top 30 U.S. counties with the highest COVID-19 death rates, according to data compiled by USA TODAY.

St. John the Baptist Parish, with a population of 43,446, had recorded 105 deaths as of Oct. 12. Nearly 60% of the parish’s COVID-19 victims were Black and many came from Reserve. “This is a result of historical racism,” longtime Reserve resident and activist Robert Taylor said. “We’ve gotten the worst of everything, and we’re getting the worst of this.” Plants in the parish emit chemicals deemed likely carcinogens by the EPA. The largest of those, Denka Performance Elastomer, releases the highest amount – more than 75,000 pounds of chloroprene in 2018, or 42 times the amount of the next-highest emitter, EPA records show.

The 100-mile stretch between New Orleans and Baton Rouge is known as “Cancer Alley” because of its high number of petrochemical plants. The long line of racism – from slavery to decades of discrimination – entrenched along that riverfront territory is a key reason COVID-19 is spreading there so quickly, said Robert Bullard, a distinguished professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy at Texas Southern University who is considered the father of the modern environmental justice movement. “It was like a heat-seeking missile that zeroed in on the most vulnerable populations,” Bullard said, “and the result was this death bomb.”

The only neoprene plant in the US

Highway 44 in St. John the Baptist Parish runs parallel with the Mississippi River and winds alongside squat, red-bricked homes, church chapels and roadside BBQ joints. As the road approaches Reserve, the sprawling tangle of tubes, steel pipes and smokestacks of the Denka plant emerges to the north. The facility was expanded in 1968 by DuPont to produce neoprene, a synthetic rubber used to make tires in World War II and now used for wetsuits, laptop sleeves and other products. In 2015, DuPont sold the neoprene production part of the facility to Japanese firm Denka. To make neoprene, the plant emits chloroprene, classified by the government as a “likely” carcinogen. It’s the only site in the U.S. that still produces neoprene. A report from the Louisiana Cancer Control Partnership concluded that



An EPA air monitoring device sits in the parking lot of the 5th Ward Elementary School, just down the street from the Denka Performance Elastomer neoprene plant in Reserve, La. JASPER COLT/USA TODAY

Black men and women in Louisiana “bear an unequal burden of cancer” compared to their white neighbors. A 2018 report from the Louisiana Department of Health zeroed in on St. John residents, finding that its residents got cancer at “significantly higher incidence rates” between 2006 and 2014.

Last year, the University Network for Human Rights went even deeper, surveying residents living within a mile of the Denka plant. It found that 40% of respondents regularly experienced chest pain, heart palpitations or both. And now, studies are finding those sickened St. John residents bearing the brunt of COVID-19’s wrath. Researchers at the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic reviewed nine parishes along the river and found that St. John ranked No. 1 in coronavirus deaths. Even factoring in the 28 deaths attributed to the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Home, a nursing home in Reserve ravaged by the virus, the parish’s COVID-19 death rate remained alarmingly high, said Kimberly Terrell, the study’s main author. “These are communities that for decades have been breathing air that harms their lungs,” Terrell said. “And it’s pretty clear that people who have damaged lungs are more susceptible to COVID-19.”

Denka officials dispute any connection between the chemical plant and the high death rate from COVID-19 in the surrounding neighborhood. In a statement to USA TODAY, Denka spokesman Jim Harris said St. John the Baptist residents exhibit “country-leading rates” of preexisting conditions. “We are unaware of a study suggesting chloroprene exposure could cause COVID-19, but there is absolutely no basis for that link,” Harris said. DuPont and Denka have challenged the government’s classification of chloroprene as a likely carcinogen, arguing that there’s no proven link between chloroprene and high levels of cancer in St. John. But internal company documents show that its scientists knew for decades about the dangers posed by the toxin. In a technical manual prepared in 1956 by DuPont, the company warned that chloroprene could enter the body through inhalation, causing a weakening of the central nervous system and “damage to vital organs.” “Exposure to only a small dose may be severe enough to cause death,” read the document, which is stored at the Hagley Museum and Library in Wilmington, Delaware, where DuPont is headquartered.

‘Smoke of Progress’

When Louisiana Gov. John McKeithen had to travel from the state capital of Baton Rouge to New Orleans, he often

told his driver to skip the freeway and take the river road instead. The car sped past rows of sugar cane fields, former slave plantations just a few generations earlier. Sitting in the backseat of his Cadillac limousine, McKeithen, who held the post from 1964 to 1972, and his press secretary, Mary Brocato, would review speeches or the day’s agenda. The governor’s attention would inevitably wander out the window, Brocato said. “He would say, ‘You know, Mary, this is going to be all industry and all plants and factories within 10 years.’”

McKeithen stepped into the governorship as Louisiana roiled with civil rights turbulence. McKeithen was known as a segregationist with ties to the KKK, but his views on race shifted as governor, and he intervened to quell racial violence in the city of Bogalusa, according to “Race & Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972.” But one of his top policy goals was drawing business and industry to Louisiana. McKeithen took recruiting trips around the country and ran full-page newspaper ads urging industrial plants to “Fill The Air With The Smoke of Progress.” By the late 1960s, his dream was largely fulfilled: More than 200 chemical facilities operated in Louisiana, most of them in the corridor. By the late 1950s, DuPont zeroed in on the former Belle Pointe Plantation in what today is Reserve, a sprawling property on which 141 slaves once harvested corn, wool and sugar. The company bought more than 600 acres of the plantation and began to build.

White families closest to the plant began moving out. Black families snatched up discounted homes and moved in, thinking they were getting a great deal at a time when it was otherwise difficult for Black Americans to secure home loans because of redlining and other discriminatory practices. Reserve went from being 60% white in 1960 to 61% Black in 2010.

Regulators’ slow response

The federal government has, for decades, documented cases showing how communities of color and low-income communities are more vulnerable to health and environmental threats compared with society at large. “Housing segregation, the influence of race in local zoning practices, and infrastructure development all contribute to this disparity,” according to a 2003 report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The first time Congress forced the EPA to closely monitor chemicals like chloroprene was 1990. It wasn’t until 2000 that the Department of Health and Human Services released a report describing chloroprene as “reasonably

anticipated” to be a human carcinogen. It took yet another decade for the EPA, tasked with regulating plants such as Denka, to declare chloroprene “likely” to be a human carcinogen in 2010. In 2015, the EPA published the National Air Toxics Assessment, or NATA, a detailed accounting of air pollutants, and ranked all 72,000 census tracts in the U.S. by the overall cancer risk to people in those communities. Census Tract 708 in St. John the Baptist – closest to the Denka plant – ranked No. 1 in the nation for overall cancer risk. Five of the top 10 census tracts in the country – and nine of the top 20 – were in St. John the Baptist Parish, according to the report. Census Tract 708 is 92% Black. The EPA set 0.2 micrograms per square cubic meter of air over the course of a lifetime as a safe level of chloroprene and installed air monitors in six locations near the plant to monitor Denka’s output of the toxin. Since the monitors were installed in 2016, they have shown chloroprene levels far above that level, with one monitor just west of the plant showing an average daily concentration 26 times above the EPA’s recommended level.

In 2017, Denka agreed to lower its chloroprene emissions by 85%. The company spent more than \$35 million to install new equipment. In May, Louisiana regulators confirmed that Denka had achieved that 85% reduction. Still, the air around the plant remains well above the 0.2 micrograms per square cubic meter threshold recommended by the EPA. And Denka has been pushing the EPA to downgrade its assessment of chloroprene as a “likely” carcinogen and to raise the allowable limit of emissions. Harris, the Denka spokesman, said the company agreed to reduce emissions “to assist its community and ensure peace of mind for its neighbors” but is now requesting higher emissions rates because it claims a recent study shows chloroprene is safer than previously thought. The study was conducted by consultants hired by Denka. The EPA has been deliberating over Denka’s latest request to reclassify the chemical for more than two years with no decision in sight. In a statement, the agency said the level of 0.2 micrograms per square cubic meter of chloroprene is simply a recommendation, not an enforceable rule or red line. The amount of chemical emitted from a plant is enforceable and, in that respect, Denka has remained below the 350,000 pounds per year allowed by state and federal regulators.

COVID sweeps through

The Denka plant has continued to operate unabated during the pandemic even as churches, schools, businesses and other sectors have been forced to close. Meanwhile, residents of Reserve are relying mostly on Concerned Citizens of St. John to push state and federal regulators to better monitor the Denka plant and keep them informed. Last year, Taylor, the longtime resident who is the group’s founder, traveled to Japan with other Reserve residents to meet with Denka representatives and voice concerns over the emissions. Since the start of the pandemic, Taylor has witnessed his childhood friend die from COVID-19. As he talked, Taylor looked out his front door down East 26th Street to the trail of victims left behind by cancer: two brothers who died from cancer, a husband and wife who lived across the street, another good neighbor. “They’re killing us,” he said. “Then they tell us to prove they’re doing it.” Contributing: Mark Nichols

OPINION

Heed the ghosts of elections past

Patience delivered peaceful transfer of power

Wendy R. Sherman and David Gergen

Speculation is rampant that this election night could well bring chaos and even violence. If ballots early in the evening favor President Donald Trump, it is said he will declare victory and treat the later votes as fake. But if the early evening goes for former Vice President Joe Biden, critics worry that Trump will refuse to concede, file numerous lawsuits and perhaps put troops on the streets.

Even though Republican leaders have now promised a peaceful transfer of power, who knows whether Trump will really bend to their will?

The night is sure to be contentious but need not be chaotic. The media, politicians and voters across the country could make it much more orderly by embracing three simple rules: Stick to the Constitution. Be patient. And most important, wait for the count.

Throughout our history, Americans have waited for the count, respecting democratic norms. Indeed, federal law allows for up to 35 days after the presidential election for resolution on all votes. And the winner is not official until Jan. 6, when the Electoral College meets and casts their votes.

From Washington to Jim Crow

Beyond the law, our history of presidential elections counsels patience.

George Washington had to wait over two months before it was final that he had beaten John Adams.

In 1800, the third presidential election, each state chose its own voting day, so that voting lasted from April to October. Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr wound up in a tie, sending the race to the House of Representatives. As theatergoers all know, Alexander Hamilton swung the House behind Jefferson and ensured a peaceful transfer of power months after the voting started.

In 1824, four candidates were in contention in an election that went from Oct. 26 through Dec. 1, before John Quincy Adams finally won on Feb. 9. Andrew Jackson thought he had been cheated out of victory, but instead of trying to create chaos, he crushed Adams in a rerun four years later.

One of the most divisive moments in presidential history came in 1876, when the country was still recovering from the Civil War. Democrat Samuel Tilden won the popular vote against Republican Rutherford Hayes but fell one vote short of an electoral majority. Tensions ran so high that Congress created a commission of senators, congressmen and Supreme Court justices to decide the winner. In a controversial compromise, the Democrats conceded — but conditioned on Hayes withdrawing remaining federal troops who were protecting Black office holders in the South. That ended Reconstruction and also paved the way for Jim Crow.

Changes in mass media

Early elections, of course, did not have to contend with television, mass media or social media. Newspapers in the early days were not always a daily occurrence. Most political junkies can well remember 1948, when the Chicago Daily Tribune banner headline the morning after the vote declared Thomas Dewey the victor. Hours later, celebrating a historic comeback, a jubilant Harry Truman held up a copy of the Trib as cameras flashed. Dewey graciously conceded and, again, power passed peacefully.

Television changed everything. We began to wait for election night, screens filled with projections and the drama of the moment. The Associated Press became the early standard bearer for election calling, using a 50-state network of local reporters. Over time, TV became our go-to source of news.

In 1960, about midnight, The New York Times declared John F. Kennedy the winner against Richard Nixon,

though its managing editor later revealed that the decision was based on a hope and a prayer. Nixon spoke before dawn, saying he might not win but refusing to concede. Supporters insisted that a couple of states had a corrupted count — Chicago graveyards in those days were known to vote twice.

It turned out to be one of Nixon's finest moments: He withdrew, arguing that a long court case would be bad for the country. The torch was passed to a new generation of Americans.

In 1981, Ronald Reagan notably opened his inaugural address praising the nation's tradition: For almost two centuries, he said, "the transfer of authority as called for in the Constitution routinely takes place. ... In the eyes of many in the world, this every four-year ceremony we accept as normal is nothing less than a miracle." To applause, Reagan then thanked President Jimmy Carter, the loser, for gracefully turning over the reins.

More recently, who can forget the long, drawn out election counts of 2000 between George W. Bush and Al Gore. The Democrat won the popular vote, but Florida remained undecided and key to an Electoral College win. On election night, every network and cable channel called the race for Gore. Networks began to reconsider after Karl Rove reportedly called on Fox News to change its prediction.

Although Gore initially conceded, he decided a recount was in order, and lawyers descended on Florida. Debate simmered over "hanging chads" — ballots that were open to conflicting interpretations. Democrats sued for a recount in specific counties, lost in the state circuit court, eventually leading to a highly controversial Supreme Court 5-4 decision for Bush on that Dec. 12, five weeks after the election.

Act of a patriot

Gore could have chosen to take his case to the House, but in an act of patriotism and a belief in the peaceful transition of power envisioned by the Constitution, he conceded the election.

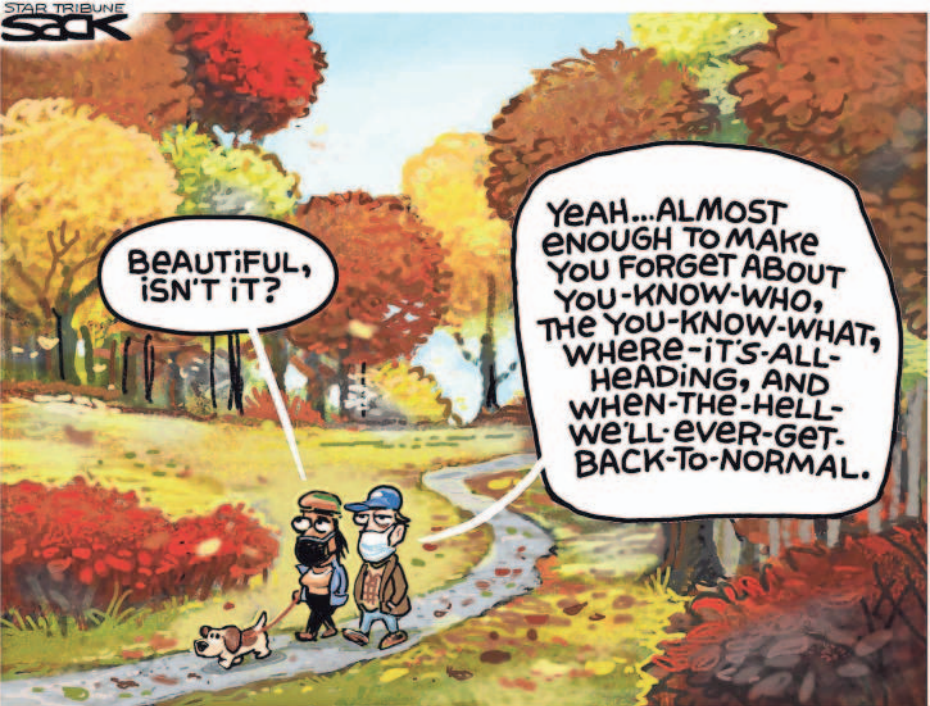
We are approaching an election that feels like no other but in truth is really a version of days past. It is, of course, possible that one candidate will have a landslide in hand on election night, but given the pandemic and the likely avalanche of mail-in ballots — ballots that inevitably will require time to process — it may be more likely we will have to wait for the count.

We have already experienced similar waits during the primaries. Incumbent Rep. Eliot Engel did not know he had lost to Jamaal Bowman in New York until nearly a month after the primary in June. And in 2018, Rep. David Valadao of California conceded to TJ Cox an entire month after the election. In both cases, losing candidates peacefully conceded.

In our general election on Nov. 3, there will no doubt be voices calling ballots into question and perhaps early predictions to be reconsidered. But at the end of the day or week or month, we will have a winner.

True public leadership requires adherence to our Constitution, to a civic patience and to a memory of our history — ensuring that after we wait for the count, we can and should have a peaceful transfer of power.

Wendy R. Sherman, a member of USA TODAY's Board of Contributors, is a professor of practice at Harvard Kennedy School, director of its Center for Public Leadership and author of "Not for the Faint of Heart." She was undersecretary of State for political affairs from 2011-15 and led U.S. negotiations on the Iran nuclear deal. David Gergen is a professor of public service at the Kennedy School and co-founder of its Center for Public Leadership. He has served as a White House adviser to four presidents and is now a senior political analyst at CNN.



STEVE SACK/THE MINNEAPOLIS STAR-TRIBUNE/POLITICALCARTOONS.COM

COVID-19 devastates opioid treatment

I know the struggle of addiction too well

Jim Wahlberg

Opioids have become a political battleground. Look no further than the first presidential debate when, in response to a comment by President Donald Trump, former Vice President Joe Biden said, "My son like a lot of people at home had a drug problem. He's overtaking it. He's fixed it. He's worked on it. And I'm proud of him."

Unfortunately, when addiction mixes with politics, we forget there are real people struggling, and that has fatal consequences.

I know the struggle of addiction too well. After recovering from my years-long battle with drugs and alcohol, I watched my son battle with his own addiction. Without a doubt, it was more painful to witness my son go through the experience than it was to endure the hardships of my own drug use.

My question is this: When did the mothers, fathers, sisters and children struggling with substance misuse become numbers and statistics used as tools for political gain? No child chooses that path, and no parent chooses that path for his child.

In addition to being an election year, 2020 has been fraught with concern, understandably about the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, opioid addiction hasn't gone anywhere. Instead, it has gotten worse.

One in 12 American adults struggles with a substance use disorder. Nearly 72,000 Americans died of drug overdoses in 2019, nearing record numbers.

Opioid-related deaths are on track to be even higher this year:

- Overdose deaths increased by about 10% in the first three months of 2020, compared with the same time period last year.
- Since the pandemic began, more than 40 states have recorded increases in opioid-related deaths, according to the American Medical Association.
- In a June survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 13% of adults said they had started or increased substance use to deal with the stress of COVID-19.
- The National Institutes of Health says those with opioid-use disorder are more vulnerable to the coronavirus.

One devastating effect is that the pandemic is making a crucial factor in treating addiction so much harder: human connection. Addiction can be fueled by loneliness, isolation and depression. "Social isolation has always been a huge component of drug overdose risk," says Traci Green, an epidemiologist at Brown University.

People are taking drugs to cope with feelings that seem overwhelming and unending. I was one of those people. Dorchester, where I grew up, is one of the Boston communities that would gain a reputation as ground zero for the opioid epidemic. It started with guys

robbing drugstores to steal OxyContin, led to our neighbors making more robberies to pay for what they needed to avoid dope sickness, and grew into the Goliath we're fighting today.

In my case, I drank my first beer at 8, smoked weed at 10 and by the time I was a teenager, I was putting anything in my system I could get my hands on, as long as I thought it would change how I felt. I went to prison at 17 for assault and then for home invasion at 22. I got sober when I found a 12-step fellowship and my Catholic faith during a nine-year state prison sentence. But if things had gone another way, I could easily have been dead by 25.

Addiction isn't something we beat alone. The disruption of 12-step and addiction support groups during the pandemic has been devastating. Residential programs have shut their doors, and much of the safety net is cut. I hope the release of my book telling my recovery story, and a short film and documentary about a family looking for answers after a young mother's overdose, can help bring attention to this need.

Too often we are reactive, not proactive, when it comes to offering people help and healing from addiction. We wait for them to come to us. A lot of them never do. As a society, we would be wise to stop placing blame on people doing the best they can with a chronic brain disorder — and start taking steps to address the problem. If our neighbor tells us their child has cancer, we bring over food, cut their grass and offer to watch their other children. But if our neighbor tells us that their child is addicted to drugs, we tell our kids to stay away from that house.

Let's start reaching out to friends and neighbors. And our leadership has to start pushing actionable plans that address the problem from the ground up. If adults 18-25 are the most likely age group to use addictive drugs, then action starts with parents talking to their children about opioids. It starts with school programs that explain addiction to young people in terms they can understand. It starts with providing mental health resources to our teens, and even incorporating more faith-based resources into recovery.

A 2019 study in the Journal of Religion and Health found that "religious beliefs, practices and belonging as well as spiritual programs inspired by faith in a higher being significantly contribute to the prevention of and recovery from substance abuse." In my case, it was the thing that saved me.

Thankfully, my son is in recovery and with family. But our country is in trouble. There's a lot more work that needs to be done, and we won't get there by burying the problem under a lot of partisan noise.

Jim Wahlberg, author of the memoir "The Big Hustle: A Boston Street Kid's Story of Addiction and Redemption" and the creator of the short film "What About the Kids?", is also the director of the Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation.

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Fears spur decline in giving for nonprofits

Americans hold back amid uncertainty

Coral Murphy
USA TODAY

Donations to nonprofit organizations, including big names like the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association, are dropping as Americans give less due to pandemic-fueled job losses and fears of getting laid off.

The challenge is being felt across a wide range of nonprofits, including those related to the arts and education, with half of the charities saying in May that they expected donations to fall by at least 20% in the next 12 months, according to a survey by the Charities Aid Foundation of America.

The decrease in contributions is resulting in millions of job losses at nonprofits and is both hurting the people the organizations serve and putting at risk funding for research into ailments such as cancer.

There are some bright spots, however, with nontraditional fundraising, such as GoFundMes, staying afloat and a rise in contributions for social justice causes.

“The pandemic has severely reduced our fundraising revenue and forced us to take significant cost-saving measures.”

Stephen Cavanaugh
American Cancer Society

“People who have lost their jobs in the last few months understandably don’t have the resources to donate to charities like they had in the past,” says, Rick Cohen, chief communications officer for the National Council of Nonprofits.

He also notes that although health services have seen an increase in demand and donations, the increase in demand exceeds the increase in contributions.

An overall decrease in donations was exacerbated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Cohen said.

“When you’re traveling on an airplane, you’re advised to put on your oxygen mask before helping others,” Cohen said. “That’s exactly how people are reacting to donations.”

In the weeks after the pandemic led to lockdowns across the U.S., around 88% of nonprofit organizations experienced a 15% or more revenue decline, with 13% having to suspend most or all operations, according to the COVID-19 Nonprofit Workforce Trends Report.

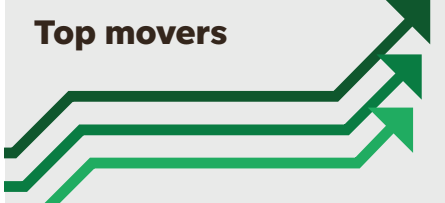
Due to the crisis, over 1.6 million nonprofit workers have lost their jobs, according to a report from Johns Hopkins University.

More than 65% of nonprofits have budgets under \$500,000, making

See **DONATIONS**, Page 2B

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Biggest large-cap stock price increases (by percentage) for week ending Oct. 16.	
Bentley Systems Cl B.....	31.6%
Dada Nexus Limited A	24.3%
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If you’re struggling but need a car, it’s best to review your options – and look for how to save for a bigger down payment and rebuild your credit score. SUSAN TOMPOR/USA TODAY NETWORK

It could be a tough time to get a decent car loan

Pandemic adds to usual hurdles for many households

Susan Tompor
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Car buyers never had an easy time finding a decent car loan if their credit wasn’t up to snuff. But lately, they’re needing more money for a down payment to get into that car and they’re staring at higher rates than many would expect.

Lower income workers have been hit hard during the pandemic as they experience big layoffs at retailers or restaurants. And if they’ve held onto a job, many are clocking far fewer hours under capacity limits designed to halt the spread of the coronavirus.

Many struggling workers are the most likely to be hurt financially by the pandemic, economists say, and the least likely to be able to adjust quickly over time economically.

How struggling households take on debt matters, especially now.

It doesn’t mean that subprime borrowers – those with credit scores in a range between 300 to 600 – can’t get a car loan.

Many, though, must jump through more hoops, as lenders become increasingly concerned about the economic prognosis for the months ahead.

“The loans they are being offered are less attractive and less workable,” said Jonathan Smoke, chief economist for Cox Automotive.

“The terms are shorter, the down payment requirements are larger, and the interest rates are higher, so combine those financial conditions with record high vehicle prices and you get a very unfavorable time to buy,” Smoke said.

In fact, Smoke said, loans to subprime borrowers are down the most of any credit category year to year.

Risky credit means more hurdles in 2020

Deep subprime loans – for borrowers with a 300 to 500 credit score – dropped below 3% of total loans in the second quarter, a record low since Experian began publishing the data in 2007.

Deep subprime had been as high as 5.25% of the loan originations in the second quarters of 2008 and 2009.

If you’re struggling but need a car, it’s best to review your options – and look for how to save for a bigger down payment and rebuild your credit score, including paying off some debt on any heavily used credit cards. Make sure you pay your bills on time to help boost your credit score too.

Experian Boost, for example, will allow you to sign up for a program where your Netflix account, phone and utility payments can count toward some limited FICO credit scores. Boost reports only positive payments. See www.experian.com/boost. Not all lenders use the same credit information affected by Experian Boost, however.

Whatever your credit score, it pays to check your credit report at www.annualcreditreport.com to try to clear up any mistakes or issues before you shop for a car loan.

You can get free weekly online credit reports now through April 2021, as part of the financial breaks relating to the COVID-19 crisis.

Detroit credit union offers unique help

Some credit unions and others run special programs for credit-challenged consumers, so it can pay to shop around.

The strategy is to help people maintain a job, as many lower-income workers have trouble getting to and from work without a car.

“It’s a necessity. You need a vehicle to get to work. You need mobility,” said Joumana Mcdad, chief strategy

and innovation officer for One Detroit Credit Union.

The credit union has a program for first-time car buyers that offers rates of 8.99% on a car loan regardless of credit score.

The rate can drop to 7.99% for a student with a grade point average of 3.5 or higher – or if the borrower has completed working with a “Life Coach” through the United Way Center for Working Families partnership.

The loan requires a \$500 deposit to be held until 12 consecutive payments have been made. Once that requirement is met, the deposit is transferred to a savings account in the member’s name.

The borrower must be employed for 90 days to assist in the underwriting process. No cosigner is required on the loan.

While 8% or 9% for a car loan rate doesn’t sound like a deal when car-makers heavily advertised some 0% deals a few months ago, it is a bargain for subprime borrowers.

Mcdad said some car loans can be 17% or higher when someone has a low credit score or a limited credit history. Some predatory car lending at “Buy here, pay here” used car lots can be in the 25% range, she said.

The credit union launched the program in July 2019 and partnered with the United Way Center for Working Families.

The program has made 34 car loans so far, adding up to \$465,000 in loans for first-time buyers.

“It wasn’t about making money,” Mcdad said. “It was more about the need in the community.”

She noted that most auto loan borrowers have a steady income and will make their car payments. But first-time buyers often get saddled with an unaffordable interest rate or end up being denied credit altogether.

The average car loan for the credit union’s program is around \$13,000 with monthly payments around \$240.

See **CAR LOANS**, Page 2B

Plan a budget to meet a vision of home

Tanisha A. Sykes

Special to USA TODAY

When it comes to renovating your new home, it can be difficult to decide what to do first.

Melissa Perlman and Mark Burns closed on their beach cottage in Delray Beach, Florida, nearly two weeks ago.

The first project they tackled was landscaping. The home, built in 1956, was recently renovated.

“It was move-in ready and pretty perfect in our eyes,” says Perlman, president and founder of Blueivy Communications, a public relations agency. “We live on a semi-active road, so our landscaper put in Colusa plants that will grow and eventually provide more privacy in our front yard.”

Before writing up a to-do list, take a good look at your budget, one expert advises.

“Don’t spend too much money on over-improvements,” says Artur Muller, founder and CEO of Amluxe Realty in Lighthouse Point, Florida. “Create a maximum budget for renovations, which will keep your spending in line with comparable upgrades on the market.”

Perlman and Burns, the COO at Blueivy, focused on making small additions such as landscaping, buying furniture for the master bedroom, and placing decor, such as Adirondack chairs, on the front and back porches. They’ve spent about \$6,000 so far.

Homeowners who planned to renovate in 2019 anticipated spending \$10,000 on renovations, according to Houzz. In addition, bathrooms overtook kitchens as the most popular remodeling project, according to the latest survey from the National Association of Home Builders.

So, where do you begin?

Create a vision of what you want your home to look like, Muller says. Then put these home renovation projects at the top of your to-do list.

1. Painting

Not only is painting easy on your pocketbook, “it is one of the simplest



Mark Burns and Melissa Perlman tackled landscaping first. MELISSA PERLMAN

and most forgiving projects that will have a major impact,” says Benjamin Shrauner, a real estate investor and avid DIYer. In his experience, you can paint a standard bedroom for “the cost of the paint alone, around \$35 to \$45 a gallon.” Today’s primer and paint combos do a great job giving one coat of coverage, he says.

2. Lighting

Just like changing a paint color can dramatically impact the appeal of a room, so too, can lighting.

“Dim and darkly lit rooms often feel small or uncomfortable,” Shrauner says.

Consider replacing light fixtures with color-temperature bulbs to give the room a soft white, bright white, or daylight effect. “Depending on the number of lights in the room, a new look can cost as little as \$10 per room,” he says.

3. Decorating

Only one week in, Perlman and Burns “focused on adding some items that would make living here more enjoyable

immediately,” Perlman says. They warmed up the home by hanging pictures and paintings, and to add some curb appeal, they built both a trellis and an arbor. Next up is their porch swing, “which we will hang with the help of a contractor to make sure it doesn’t take the roof down,” she says. These small fixes have made living there wonderful, they said.

4. Improving flooring

These days, homeowners prefer hardwood flooring over tile. Luxury vinyl planks and other synthetic flooring have made great strides over the last five years, Shrauner says: “These snap-together planks offer a variety of fantastic looks at an affordable price.”

Jim Angleton, a homeowner, has renovated several properties and advises new owners to lay tile or plank the floors before all of their furniture is placed.

Of course, flooring prices depend on the cost of materials, labor, size and location. HomeGuide says that, on average, ceramic tile costs \$10 to \$15 per square foot to install, while hardwood

flooring costs \$6 to \$23 per square foot to install.

5. Upgrading bathrooms

If you are lucky enough not to have to replumb your entire home, a cosmetic bath renovation, where no plumbing or electric is disturbed and the layout remains intact, may suffice.

“It may involve replacing toilets, changing vanities, replacing fixtures, or upgrading to new tiles,” says Angleton, whose company is a financial lender.

While he and his wife just completed a gut job on a 3,500-square-foot second home, he says to budget \$10,000 per bathroom, depending on the home’s condition and your preferences.

6. Renovating kitchens

The kitchen should always be one of the first projects to tackle because homeowners want to make a good first impression, and it is one of the rooms where guests spend the most time.

“This renovation includes new cabinets, flooring, appliances, countertops and often, the layout, to open up more space,” Muller says. “Prices for this project vary from \$15,000 to \$30,000 and up, depending on size, materials.”

7. Fixing major systems

When you first buy a home, check to ensure all of its major systems, like heating, cooling and electricity, are working properly.

“They don’t have to be perfect, but if one is operable, address that issue first,” Shrauner says. Also check for “electrical hazards,” he says, because they could pose a safety issue.

Perlman and Burns hired an electrician to reset a faulty sprinkler system.

“Our priority was fixing items that had been off or not working to ensure that smaller efforts, like planting trees, would be supported by projects needing a professional,” they said.

“Always seek professional advice as you move forward with your projects, even the ones that you are looking to do yourself,” Muller says.

Donations

Continued from Page 1B

most of them under-resourced even before the pandemic, according to the Harvard Business Review.

Donations generally account for more than 14% of the overall revenue of nonprofits. Nonprofits generally earn more than 80% of their revenue through private fees for services and through government grants and contracts, according to the National Council of Nonprofits.

“The pandemic has severely reduced our fundraising revenue and forced us to take significant cost-saving measures,” the American Cancer Society’s community development manager, Stephen Cavanaugh, told USA TODAY.

The ACS reduced its overall budget by approximately 30% and made cuts to both non-personnel and personnel expenses. It eliminated over 1,000 staff positions nationwide.

The ACS’s research program is at major risk and facing a 50% cut in funding if trends continue.

The American Heart Association also has been facing hardships caused by the pandemic.

Although the organization’s audited financial statements of the last fiscal year are not available yet, the group is bracing for a drop in revenue.

“Like all nonprofits, the American Heart Association has been impacted and we’ve made significant changes to mitigate the impact,” Suzanne Grant, a representative of the American Heart Association, told USA TODAY.

The organization pivoted to online fundraising and was able to offset some losses by eliminating travel, freezing open jobs, and other cutbacks. Those actions saved the association over \$120 million, according to Grant.

Social justice causes have seen an increase in donations this year through Amazon’s AmazonSmile.

Charities with a focus on civil rights and social action, propelled by the Black Lives Matter movement, had nearly 70% growth in donations in the last year, according to Amazon.

In July, more than 4,000 nonprofits called for specific aid they say nonprofits need to see in a COVID-19 relief bill. Among the requests, nonprofits asked Congress for an extension of the Pay-



Donations to charitable organizations have declined as Americans grapple with economic uncertainty.

DONALD_GRUENER/GETTY IMAGES

Charities with a focus on civil rights and social action had nearly 70% growth in donations in the last year, according to Amazon.

check Protection Program and access to low-cost loans to midsize and large nonprofits to be included in the bill.

In September, 38 national nonprofit CEOs called for Congress to approve a relief package immediately. Some of the groups included the Girl Scouts of the USA, the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society.

Lawmakers remain at an impasse over a COVID-19 stimulus package, with hopes for its passage rising and falling almost weekly. Democrats blocked a \$300 billion plan supported by Republicans last month. Then House Democrats passed a \$2.2 trillion plan this month, but Senate Republicans are unlikely to act on it.

President Donald Trump also briefly pulled out of negotiations and reversed course, first calling for stand-alone bills on airline relief and \$1,200 stimulus checks, and then offering a \$1.8 trillion proposal that Democrats rejected as inadequate.

The latest plan from Democrats includes an expansion of the Paycheck Protection Program to larger nonprofits, and it would also increase the amounts that Americans can deduct for charitable giving.

“There are good items in that bill, but there is still more that is needed,” Cohen said.

Car loans

Continued from Page 1B

The average credit score in the program is 545 and in the subprime camp. Detroit’s average FICO score is 613, as of the first quarter of 2020, which is among the lowest for large cities in the U.S., according to Experian.

Finding the lowest interest rate possible is essential if you have really bad credit. Someone who has a car loan rate in the 20% range is going to be badly underwater if they need to sell that car in several years. Their monthly payments would mostly be interest and they wouldn’t be building any equity in the vehicle.

“It really is a horrific cycle,” Mcdad said.

How do you steer clear of trouble?

One way to avoid being underwater on a car loan is to consider how much money you really have for a down payment.

If you put only 10% cash down on a car – and you have no trade-in value to add to the mix – you’re barely covering the taxes, title and other fees, according to Melinda Zabritski, senior director of automotive financial solutions for Experian.

She said the interest rate on a car loan is typically higher if a consumer is borrowing a good deal of money on a low-priced car or ends up with what’s known as a higher loan-to-value ratio.

Extending the length of a loan – as is popular to do today – can help you find a more affordable monthly payment, Zabritski said.

But you’re at a greater risk of owing more on the car loan than what the car is worth when you need to buy another car or truck down the line.

The average term for a new car was 71.54 months in the second quarter of 2020 – up from 67.97 for the same quarter five years ago, according to Experian’s data.

The average used car loan was 65.3 months, again edging upward.

Even someone with good credit might not build any equity in the car for roughly three years if they’ve taken out a six-year car loan, depending on the popularity of the make and model.

Don’t only dwell on the monthly payment. Review the interest rate you’re being charged.

The average rate paid by risky borrowers who fall into the deep subprime category was 20.93% for a 72-month used car loan taken out in the second quarter of 2020, according to Experian’s data. It has risen slightly from the average 20.31% for used cars for the same time a year ago.

By contrast, the average rate paid for a used car loan fell in the past year for borrowers with excellent credit scores. Borrowers in the super prime category saw average rates of 4% for 72-month used car loans taken out in the second quarter of 2020, according to Experian. The average fell significantly from 4.88% for the same time a year ago.

Subprime borrowers may not be locked out of car loans, but they’re not getting the deals that many other car borrowers are seeing in 2020.

Car loan rates, again in general, remain favorable in 2020.

If you have a good credit score, the best car loan rates are in the 2% range, such as 2.69% to 2.99%, according to Bankrate.com. Those rates can be had with credit scores of 700 or better.

Banks and credit unions aren’t offering 0% rates but some manufacturers continue to offer a few here and there to those with great credit on select models. In general, many 0% deals now are targeted to move older models, including some 2019 models, according to Cox Automotive. It’s a very different landscape from April when 0% blanketed much of the industry. Now, it’s rare to see 0% for 84-month car loans.

General Motors, for example, is offering 0% APR financing for 60 months on the 2020 Cadillac XT4, XT5 and XT6. Ford Motor has a 0% for 60 months on 2020 Fusion (gas), Escape (gas), Edge, Explorer and Expedition, with \$1,000 trade assistance cash on the SUVs listed.

The average rate for a four-year used car loan is 4.96% – down from 5.33% at the beginning of the year, according to Bankrate.com.

The average for the five-year new car rate is 4.24% – down from 4.60% at the beginning of the year.

“Between stay-at-home orders and fluctuating financial situations, the reality is that subprime consumers may not be in-market for a vehicle right now,” Zabritski wrote in a blog.

Streaming is out there for every budget

We run the numbers on the available options



Tech Talk
Kim Komando

What’s the most expensive video streaming service? College. You might think otherwise looking at your credit card statements. Streaming entertainment services are experiencing unprecedented profits as the pandemic continues to force us to sit at home on the couch.

You don’t have to pay for something interesting to help pass the time. You can watch movies for free.

Don’t forget; you also get terrific programs as part of your Amazon Prime membership. Their original shows are high-quality and the library is impressive. Take a look and I’m sure you’ll find something great to watch.

It’s easy to sign up for myriad streaming services. If you’re not careful, you could end up paying more than you do for cable. Here are some ways to keep your streaming budget in check:

A \$20 monthly budget

The days of Netflix versus Hulu are over. There is a seemingly endless stream of competitors ranging from cable TV platforms like Peacock to specialty networks like HBO Max.

CBS All Access, owned by Viacom, includes content from Comedy Central, MTV, BET, Nickelodeon, Paramount and more. It throws in sports as well – including NFL games on CBS’ schedule through 2022 that are broadcast in your area, plus the upcoming Super Bowl. It also offers NCAA basketball and PGA golf tournaments.

To keep to the \$20 monthly budget, choose the ad-supported version of CBS All Access for \$6 per month. You’ll get ads right before your content, but this gives you more money for other platforms.

Next up is Peacock Premium that includes over 20,000 shows and movies



Streaming services are experiencing large profits as the COVID-19 continues to force us to sit at home on the couch.

GETTY IMAGES

from NBC Universal. You can also watch currently-airing shows a day after they broadcast so that you won’t miss the prime-time lineup.

Peacock’s ad-supported version is \$5 a month. This includes next-day access to NBC’s current lineup, along with content from Bravo, Syfy, Telemundo, USA Network and Universal Studios.

Finally, let’s wrap up our streaming package with the tremendously popular Disney+. This streaming network includes almost all of Disney’s decades-spanning catalog and several hit shows from Fox like The Simpsons.

Of course, you get access to the entire Marvel Studios catalog and the Star Wars saga – as well as fan-favorite series “The Mandalorian.” To bring Baby Yoda and friends into your living room, Disney+ costs \$7 monthly.

Let’s tally it up:

- CBS All Access: \$6
- Peacock Premium: \$5
- Disney+: \$7
- Monthly total: \$18**

A \$30 monthly budget

With this monthly budget, the trick here is bundling. In our plan above, we only subscribed to the basic \$7 Disney+ service. The next Disney tier up includes Hulu and ESPN.

For \$6 more per month, you get content from ABC, AMC, Bravo, CBS, E, Fox, Fox Sports, FX, NBC, NFL Network, Oxygen, PBS, Syfy and USA Network. Your

subscription also includes baseball, college football, soccer, hockey and UFC fights.

Plus, you get access to Hulu’s original programming like “The Handmaid’s Tale” and “Little Fires Everywhere” without a separate subscription. With the premium package, the Disney + membership is \$13 per month.

To round things out, add Apple TV+ for \$6. Apple’s streaming platform is filled with exclusive shows you can’t find anywhere else like “See” and “The Morning Show.”

Alternatively, you can opt for the ad-free versions of CBS All Access or Peacock. Both of these plans run for \$10 per month, leaving you with \$10 leftover. To stay under \$30, you can only choose one.

- CBS All Access: \$6
 - Peacock Premium: \$5
 - Disney + with Hulu and ESPN : \$13
 - Apple TV+: \$6
 - Monthly total: \$30**
- or
- CBS All Access ad-free: \$10
 - Peacock Premium: \$5
 - Disney + with Hulu and ESPN: \$13
 - Monthly total: \$28**
- or
- CBS All Access: \$6
 - Disney + with Hulu and ESPN: \$13
 - Monthly total: \$29**

A \$50 monthly budget

If you can make it work, \$50 a month

gives you much more flexibility. You’ll have room for platforms like Netflix or HBO Max.

Netflix runs \$9 monthly for a basic subscription, and includes thousands of hours of hit films and exclusive streaming content like “The Umbrella Academy.” HBO Max, on the other hand, costs \$15 per month, and includes all currently-airing HBO content, HBO hits like “The Sopranos” and “Game of Thrones” and the Warner Brothers catalog.

You also have the option to go totally ad-free with your CBS All Access and Peacock subscriptions.

- CBS All Access ad-free: \$10
 - Peacock Premium ad-free \$10
 - Disney+ with Hulu and ESPN: \$13
 - Netflix basic: \$9
 - Monthly total: \$42**
- or
- CBS All Access ad-free: \$10
 - Peacock Premium ad-free: \$10
 - Disney+ with Hulu and ESPN: \$13
 - HBO Max: \$15 per month
 - Monthly total: \$48**
- or
- CBS All Access ad-free: \$10
 - Peacock Premium ad-free \$10
 - Disney+ with Hulu and ESPN: \$13
 - Netflix basic: \$9
 - Apple TV+: \$6
 - Monthly total: \$48**
- or
- CBS All Access ad-free: \$10
 - Peacock Premium ad-free \$10
 - Disney+ with Hulu and ESPN: \$13
 - Netflix Premium: \$16
 - Monthly total: \$49**

Try streaming services for free

With so many different services available, it’s easy to get confused when deciding which one is best for you and your family. Fortunately, you can usually get a 30-day free trial.

Learn about all the latest technology on the Kim Komando Show, the nation’s largest weekend radio talk show. Kim takes calls and dispenses advice on today’s digital lifestyle, from smartphones and tablets to online privacy and data hacks. For her daily tips, free newsletters and more, visit her website at komando.com.

Internet protection law finds itself in crosshairs

Jessica Gwynn
USA TODAY

What is Section 230?

The Communications Decency Act is an obscure law passed by Congress in 1996 that has profoundly shaped today’s internet.

It’s a provision of that law that’s so hotly contested. Section 230 was intended to protect free expression on the internet by shielding internet companies from liability for much of the content their users post on their platforms, and granting companies legal immunity for good faith efforts to remove content.

That provision helped fuel the rise of the modern internet. Companies such as Facebook, Twitter and Google-owned YouTube say they could not exist in their current form without its protections.

There are exceptions to the law, such as federal crimes and intellectual property claims. Also, lawmakers in 2018 chipped away at Section 230 protections by passing a law that makes it easier to sue internet platforms that knowingly aid sex trafficking.

But generally speaking, internet companies have broad latitude to decide what can stay on their platforms and what must come down.

Section 230 has critics on both sides of the aisle. Democrats and Republicans generally agree that social media platforms should be held more accountable for how they police content, and the parties have introduced a number of bills, none of which has gained traction on Capitol Hill.

Democrats including presidential nominee Joe Biden have urged Congress to revise Section 230 to make tech companies more accountable for hate speech and extremism, election interference, misinformation and disinformation.

Republican critics accuse tech companies of censoring conservatives and limiting their reach on social media. There is no clear evidence to support those claims, which tech companies deny.

President Donald Trump and his surrogates have been the loudest critics of Section 230. Trump has repeatedly called on Congress to repeal it. The Justice Department has asked Congress to adopt a new law that would hold Facebook, Google and Twitter legally accountable for how they moderate content.

Trump’s attacks on Section 230 have intensified in the final weeks of his re-election campaign as social media companies label or remove posts they deem false or misleading or that could cause harm or incite violence.

Charges of anti-conservative bias raged again last week when Facebook and Twitter limited access to a dubious article about Biden and his son Hunter.

Facebook said it slowed the spread of the article to fact-check its claims. Twitter said it blocked the article because it included people’s personal information and relied on hacked materials, both violations of its policies.

With the presidential election just weeks away, social media companies are moving aggressively to remove misinformation that could sway voters or tilt the election.

“(Biden) and his family are crooked, and they got caught. And now they are being protected by Big Tech,” Trump said Thursday. “We must immediately strip them of their Section 230 protection.”

On Thursday, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai said he plans to craft new rules to limit Section 230’s scope.

The Commerce Department asked the FCC to look into “ambiguities” in Section 230 after Trump issued an executive order in May. That executive order came after Twitter put fact-check labels on his tweets for the first time.

The FCC’s two Democratic commissioners, Geoffrey Starks and Jessica Rosenworcel, challenged Pai’s decision. The Internet Association, an industry group, also criticized Pai.

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TRAVEL

The COVID-19 guide to holiday travel (or not)

If you decide to go, being flexible and spontaneous could pay off in savings



Holiday journeys are not a priority in 2020. This summer, “holiday travel” searches dropped by 43% from 2019. GETTY IMAGES



On Travel
Christopher Elliott
USA TODAY

This holiday travel season will be like none other in recent memory. Might as well throw out the rulebook for planning your Thanksgiving, Christmas, or New Year’s trips because you won’t need it. “The coming holidays will bring unprecedented challenges,” says Mahmood Khan, a professor at Virginia Tech who directs the business school’s program in hospitality and tourism management. “Be prepared for the unexpected.” Travel will be down – way down – from past holiday seasons. So will most prices. Travelers will make their booking decisions at the last minute, days, or even hours before their departure. And the risks will be a lot higher. If you’re older or have a medical condition, you might want to celebrate the holidays at home. Fewer people want to travel. Holiday-related journeys are “not a top priority” in 2020, according to Eugene Levin, the chief strategic officer for the analytics

company SEMrush. That may be an understatement. This summer, online searches for “holiday travel” decreased by 43% from 2019. “Christmas travel” is down by 46%, and “Thanksgiving travel” is off 38%.

Holiday travel prediction: Prices will fall

Prices will be lower. The steepest declines are for air travel. Priceline analyzed recent flight booking data and found that the average price of nonstop round-trip flight tickets is down more than 30% for both Thanksgiving weekend and the December travel season compared to 2019. Hotel rates are down 10% for Thanksgiving weekend. But not everything will be cheaper. For the December travel period, hotel rates are up 3%, suggesting that demand is about to pick up. Car rental rates are also up slightly (2.5% for Thanksgiving and 7% for December). The average American will travel just 513 miles this Thanksgiving, a decrease of more than 50% from last year. “Early data about holiday travel this year shows most people will likely travel by car,” says Jeremy Murchland, president of Seven Corners, a travel insur-

Priceline found the average price of nonstop round-trip flight tickets is down more than 30% for Thanksgiving weekend and the December travel season compared to 2019.

ance company. That continues a pattern that started last summer, where people stayed closer to home. And 41% of travelers say they’re making reservations with an eye toward isolation, according to reservation data from Booking.com. “They plan to stay at a self-catered accommodation like an apartment, vacation rental or villa,” says Arjan Dijk, a senior vice president at Booking.com. “That makes it easier to social distance and take advantage of amenities such as a kitchen to cook family holiday meals.”

Holiday travel prediction: You’ll book at the last minute

Another trend that will continue from the summer: Most bookings will happen at the last minute. IHG Hotels & Resorts says since the outbreak, booking lead times have

shortened compared with previous years. In 2020, 63% of bookings happened within two days of stay, compared with 39% during the same period last year. “Spontaneity is key,” says Brian Hicks, a senior vice president at IHG Hotels & Resorts. So is flexibility. IHG is among the hotel chains that have introduced “book now, pay later” options, which allows guests to pay at the last minute or cancel without facing any penalties. “Holiday travel in 2020 will be more last-minute, depending on Mother Nature, border reopenings, and quarantine requirements,” says Limor Decter, a travel adviser with Ovation Travel Group. “Those factors will affect holiday travel plans.”

Holiday travel prediction: It won’t be entirely safe

But is travel safe? No one knows, but that isn’t stopping anyone from making an educated guess. If there’s a consensus, it’s that travel will continue to be risky – maybe too risky for you. “We’ll likely continue to see a surge of cases in the fall and over the holidays,” says Karen Edwards, a professor and epidemiologist at the University of California-Irvine. “If you must travel, be sure to follow all recommendations, including checking with destinations and events you plan to attend to be sure that travel to that destination or event is still possible. Cancel your trip if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 or concerns about risk of infection.” Edwards isn’t planning a holiday trip this year. But if she did, she’d use her own car instead of mass transit, and wear a mask at all times, even outdoors. She’d also wash her hands with soap and water for 20 seconds “as often as possible.” “Many people will probably opt to stay home,” she adds. “If they do travel, they may choose to have smaller gatherings with friends and family this year.” That’s sound advice. I said it before – and I’ll say it again – this is not the time to travel. If you can avoid getting out there, maybe you should.

More tips for your holiday trip (if you take one)

- **Do your research.** Check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website to find the most up to date guidelines for COVID-19, says Lori Calavan, Allianz Partners’ senior medical consultant. “Be prepared.” And don’t take an airline or hotel’s word for it when they claim to be safe or clean. Sherry Orel, president of the certification, audit, and assurance division of Bureau Veritas, advises considering travel companies with hygiene excellence guidelines and operation procedures beyond physical distancing and personal protective equipment. “Ask about the products and technologies used to clean,” she says.
 - **Prepare for a different kind of travel experience.** “Travelers must be prepared for enhanced health screenings at the airport and different arrangements for holiday activities and events,” says Curt Carlson, a senior vice president at Trawick International, a travel insurance company. Some airlines are offering COVID-19 tests, and hotels have started scanning guests at check-in. Traveling will be a different experience.
 - **Don’t be afraid to postpone.** It’s still dangerous out there, so if you’re concerned about getting infected, it’s best to wait until 2021. There’s no shame in waiting.
- Contributing: Associated Press*

ASK THE CAPTAIN

Pressurization in airline cabins is fully automated

John Cox
Special to USA TODAY

Upon takeoff, is pressurization of commercial passenger aircraft cabins automatic or a switch has to be flipped or activated? Is it fixed at a particular equivalent altitude level?
– Ric Guy, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan
On modern airliners, it is usually an automatic process and the airplane begins to pressurize as soon as it takes off. On most modern jets, the pressurization system gets the airplane’s intended cruising altitude from the flight management system. Once the cruise altitude is known, the automatic pressurization system calculates the proper cabin altitude not to exceed the maxi-

mum differential pressure. The pressurization system then climbs the cabin to the calculated altitude. Once descent begins, the pressurization system then descends the cabin to the destination airport elevation.

Airbus announced the discontinuation and end of production of its famed A380 in 2020. It was launched in 2000, and the first delivery was in 2007. To me, less than 20 years of longevity doesn’t seem like much of a return on investment and development for a commercial aircraft’s lifespan, considering how long the 373 and A320 have been in production. How does this lifespan compare to other commercial aircraft that have come



Life spans vary on commercial aircraft.
GETTY IMAGES

and gone?
– PRK, Illinois
Sadly, the A380 is an airplane with limited usefulness. One airline, Emirates, found the A380 to be an ideal airplane and bought almost half of them. Other airlines that did buy and operate the A380 only operated a few. Today, nearly all are parked in storage and have no prospect of returning to the sky. The A380’s life span is very short compared with the B737 (over 50 years), the A320 (over 30 years), the B767 (over 30 years) or the B747 (over 40 years). John Cox is a retired airline captain with US Airways and runs his own aviation safety consulting company, Safety Operating Systems.

Radha Blank doesn't need to explain herself or her art

Filmmaker is letting her breakthrough “Forty-Year-Old Version” speak for itself. **Page 7B**

‘A Lover’s Discourse’ is an unromantic romance

Author Xiaolu Guo tackles weighty themes including identity and perception. **Page 8B**

LIFELINE



WILL HEATH/NBC

THEY SAID WHAT? THE STARS’ BEST QUOTES

“Saturday Night Live” star Michael Che didn’t hold back during “Weekend Update,” making a punchline out of his own network. “NBC held a town hall event with President Trump because what can I say? We have a type,” Che said with a shrug as a split screen appeared over his shoulder, featuring three men who previously appeared on NBC and faced accusations of sexual assault: Bill Cosby of “The Cosby Show,” ousted “Today” anchor Matt Lauer and President Donald Trump, former star of “The Apprentice.” Cosby is serving a sentence for drugging and sexually assaulting Andrea Constand; Lauer has denied an accusation of rape by Brooke Nevils, a former staff member of NBC News; and Trump has repeatedly denied accusations of sexual misconduct.



CRAIG BARRITT/GETTY IMAGES

CAUGHT IN THE ACT PAULINA PORIZKOVA

The model is moving out of the home she shared with late ex-husband Ric Ocasek, frontman for The Cars, who died in 2019. Porizkova posted a photo of herself surrounded by packing supplies. “Last two days in my house. It’s empty, cold and dirty. I’ve never cried as much as I have in the last year. I was never a crier. In fact, the opposite. I took a lot of care NEVER to be seen crying,” she wrote, thanking friends for support and love. “So many people out there with problems larger than mine. But it doesn’t make mine hurt less, you know?” Porizkova voted to “share a little positivity with you all later.”



IT’S YOUR BIRTHDAY WHO’S CELEBRATING TODAY

Gillian Jacobs is 38. **Jennifer Holliday** is 60. **John Lithgow** is 75.

USA TODAY SNAPSHOTS

Top paid iPhone apps

App Store Official Charts for the week ending Oct. 13:

1. Minecraft, Mojang
2. Procreate Pocket, Savage Inter.
3. Heads Up!, Warner Bros.
4. HotSchedules, HotSchedules
5. Geometry Dash, RobTop Games



ASSOCIATED PRESS

STREAMING



Yahya Abdul-Mateen II stars as Bobby Seale in “The Trial of the Chicago 7.”

‘Chicago 7’ puts America on the docket

Film finds timely parallels between the current political climate and unrest of the late 1960s

Brian Truitt

USA TODAY

A year ago, Jeremy Strong was marching down Michigan Avenue with his co-stars in Aaron Sorkin’s new Netflix drama “The Trial of the Chicago 7,” taking the same route as their historical counterparts who protested at the 1968 Democratic Convention.

Chanting “No justice, no peace!” felt powerful in the moment, Strong says.

“But at the same time, we had no way of knowing just how timely it would be and that we would be marching six, eight months later chanting those same things on streets in Los Angeles, streets in Minneapolis, streets in Atlanta, streets in Kenosha (and) streets in Seattle,” he said.

“Chicago 7” (now streaming on Netflix) is primarily set during the bloody 1968 clash between protesters and Chicago police, and the 1969 legal aftermath, when the trial began for a group of defendants – including Tom Hayden (Eddie Redmayne), Abbie Hoffman (Sacha Baron Cohen), Jerry Rubin (Strong) and Bobby Seale (Yahya Abdul-Mateen II) – charged with conspiracy to incite a riot.

With a deep cast of all-stars and Sor-

“The world and this country changed to reflect what was going on in the script.”

Aaron Sorkin

kin’s filmmaking cred, “Chicago 7” has put itself in the pole position of must-watch movies this very strange, streaming-centric awards season, and is primed to vie for best picture and acting honors. But the movie also has an uncanny timeliness, a period piece that’s as much about the present as the past.

Rather than having to tweak the film to match modern times, “the world and this country in particular changed to reflect what was going on in the script,” says Sorkin, who first started working on “Chicago 7” in 2006, when Steven Spielberg asked him to write the film.

“Suddenly, Donald Trump, when he was a candidate and then after he was elected president, was getting nostalgic at his rallies about the good old days when we carry that (protester) out of

See CHICAGO 7, Page 6B



Director Aaron Sorkin, right, goes over a scene with John Carroll Lynch, left, and Sacha Baron Cohen on the set of “The Trial of the Chicago 7.”

PHOTOS BY NIKO TAVERNISE/NETFLIX

TELEVISION

Leslie Jones brings the laughs to ‘Sweep’

Revamped game show enlists former ‘SNL’ star

Bill Keveney

USA TODAY

Leslie Jones adored the ’90s version of “Supermarket Sweep,” a game show that featured contestants careening shopping carts in a mad dash for groceries and, ultimately, cash prizes.

So the five-season “Saturday Night Live” veteran is living her dream, producing and hosting ABC’s brightly colored, action-packed remake, which premiered Sunday (8 EDT/PDT).

“I just loved the whole game,” Jones says. “And I had a mission of winning that \$5,000 (grand prize). Back in the day, \$5,000 was a lot of money. Now, I didn’t know the taxes involved and I probably would have walked away with, like, \$16.62, but I still wanted to win that money. It was just such an exciting show.”

The latest version of a format introduced on ABC in 1965 features a bigger prize – up to \$100,000 – as Jones teases and then quizzes three duos on their shopping knowledge before they grab as much high-priced food as they can on a supermarket set constructed in an airport hangar. Health and safety protocols – testing, masks and social distancing – were followed as production took place last summer amid the pandemic.

“I tried to make it look like a normal supermarket, like maybe a Ralphs and a Whole Foods mixed together,” Jones says. “So regular people can go, but bougie people are going to go, too.”

The comedian, 53, who starred in 2016’s “Ghostbusters” and will be seen in “Coming 2 America,” talked to USA TODAY about grocery shopping; pandemic advice for the president and leaving “SNL.”



Leslie Jones hits the grocery aisles as host and executive producer of ABC’s “Supermarket Sweep.”

ERIC MCCANDLESS/ABC

Is “Sweep” a fantasy, especially in the pandemic, since there are no masks and people can run around without social distancing?

Leslie Jones: Yeah, but isn’t TV supposed to be fantasy? It’s escapism. It’s escaping to have joy. “Hey, you guys, we’ll probably get back to normal, but let’s escape for an hour and watch some insane people run through the store and win real money and change their life and watch me make fun of ’em.”

After instituting strict health and safety protocols on the set of “Sweep,” do you have advice for the White House, since it’s a hotspot for COVID-19 infections?

Jones: Oh, baby. Do we have an hour? The compliance nurse that was on our set the day I got there gave us this big safety (talk). After she finished explaining everything, I was kind of mad, because if this lady was on television, we would have made it through the pandemic. It was so simple as washing your hands, staying 6 feet apart, wearing your mask.

I hope I don’t get in trouble, but this is what I’m going to say: Trump could have came out on the better side of this. Only thing that he had to do was just be

See JONES, Page 6B

Chicago 7

Continued from Page 5B

here on a stretcher and punch him right in the face. We didn't need it to get more relevant, but chillingly it did with the police killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery, and those protesters being met with nightsticks and tear gas and rubber bullets."

Also, don't forget the '68 flu pandemic and a former vice president (Hubert Humphrey) running for president.

"There were so many of these parallels that are just sort of extraordinary to witness each day since we've made this film," Redmayne says.

"Chicago 7" focuses on a group of protest organizers, including young Democrats Hayden and Rennie Davis (Alex Sharp), as well as counterculture merry pranksters Rubin and Hoffman. The movie switches between the fateful day in 1968 and the subsequent trial, and reveals the tense personal relationship between Hayden, who believed in the power of elected officials, and the more revolutionary Hoffman.

Sorkin thinks they're "an interesting reflection of today's Democratic Party (and) the friction between the left and the further left." But Sorkin's film "doesn't take a side – they sort of inform each other," Redmayne says. "The social movement needs both those who can get things done through legislation and the loud voices of change."

The courtroom drama's historical setting is "without a doubt" a metaphor for

current American politics, Sorkin says, and Seale's treatment by antagonistic Judge Julius Hoffman (Frank Langella) is symbolic of the oppression of people of color.

Seale, a Black Panther Party founder, was a fighter and a man of utmost dignity even amid "a gross miscarriage of justice," says Abdul-Mateen, who understood "what it's like to be the only Black person in an all-white space" and "to be discriminated against and certainly to be judged."

Because of the way "Chicago 7" examines endemic racism and police violence then and now, it's "really the trial of the American soul," Strong says. "America was in turmoil in 1968 and America is in turmoil now, and the soul of this country is on trial again in November (with the election) and in the Supreme Court hearings."

Having an entertaining film was important for Sorkin ("It has to go with a bucket of popcorn"), but he also hopes an audience takeaway is "whether you're out in the street or taking a knee during the national anthem to protest police brutality, protesters are not anti-American. They're patriots."

Strong sees a similar collective energy and hope for change in the younger generation today, and he thinks about the end of "Chicago 7," when Rubin holds a closed fist high in solidarity during a powerful, emotional moment.

"That felt like a nostalgic gesture to me when we were filming it (last) November," Strong says. "Now that feels like a very current and immediate and necessary gesture."



Host Leslie Jones, right, is having a good time as she engages with contestants on ABC's revival of "Supermarket Sweep." ERIC MCCANDLESS/ABC

Jones

Continued from Page 5B

that person that goes, "Hey, you guys, let's wear our masks." He could have did all the other crazy stuff and been a hero. People would have been like, "Dang, you know what? That man is looking out for us. He's our president. And he's letting us know that this is up."

How has the pandemic affected stand-up comedy?

Jones: When 9/11 happened and people couldn't fly, that devastated comedians. We couldn't go to gigs anymore. This is even worse. What else is comedy but a small room with a bunch of people packed in it, breathing the same air? A lot of comedians are suffering right now. ... but a lot of (them) are finding ways to make it happen. They have outside shows. You have clubs that do like 10 people in the (room) for social distance. People are doing online shows. You find a way to adjust. But it's hard.

This is your second season away from "SNL." Do you miss it?

Jones: No, I do not. I'm so sorry. I know that would be terrible for me to just say it like that. Of course, I learned a lot at "SNL." I love what I learned there, but I (was) 47. That's a hard job. It's very restrictive. Now I'm free and y'all can really see Leslie. You can see what Leslie can do. What I learned

"What else is comedy but a small room with a bunch of people packed in it, breathing the same air?"

Leslie Jones on hard times for comedy clubs.

there is great, but I don't miss the hundred hours a week. I don't miss them cold nights. I do not miss that. I miss Kenan (Thompson), though.

Leaving probably put a strain on your connection with Kyle Mooney. (They had an intense but fictitious relationship on "SNL.")

Jones: Yes! Oh, poor Kyle. He's always awkward anyway. What's so weird is, (until) the last season, I didn't know he had an Anita Baker thing. Our whole relationship changed when he told me he loved Anita Baker. We were inseparable after that.

Do you go to the supermarket these days?

Jones: Yes. Because I love Ralphs. That's where I go. The cooked food section. But there's another one out here in L.A. called Erewhon. It's like a man hair-bun-type place. But I really like the hot food section.

Is grocery shopping a different experience during the pandemic?

Jones: It is, because everybody walks around with that mask. But for me, it's cool, because don't nobody know me. I have on the cap and a mask, so I can just grocery shop.



Jerry Rubin (Jeremy Strong center) helps a protestor get to safety when Chicago police throw tear gas in the "The Trial of the Chicago 7." NIKO TAVERNISE/NETFLIX

PUZZLES

CROSSWORD

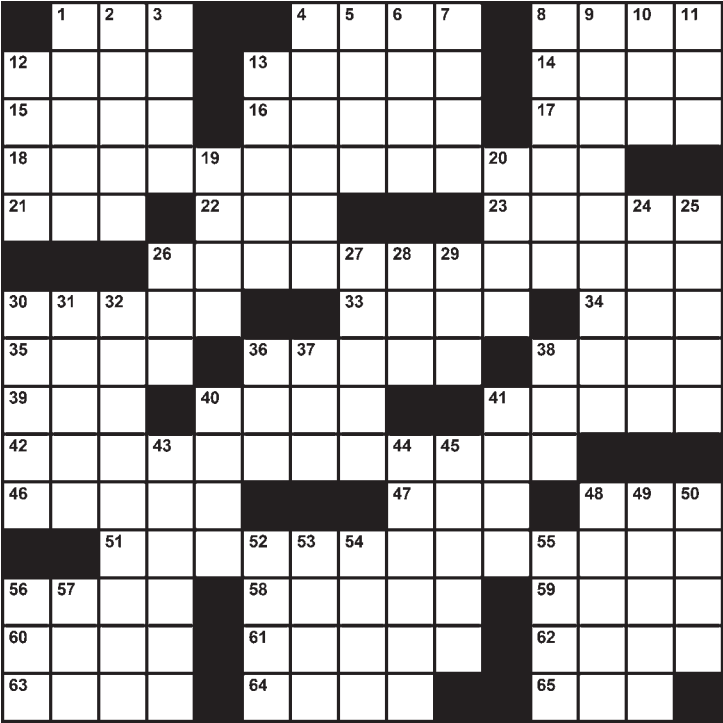
EDITED Erik Agard & Paolo Pasco

BY Patrick Jordan

SEE? SAWS!

ACROSS

- Ask for a dog treat
- Drink brand hidden in "disobeyed"
- Trims a lawn
- Odometer unit
- Phobias
- Nevada's official gemstone, e.g.
- "Garfield" canine
- Enjoy immensely
- Attractive
- "To infinity and beyond!" character
- Relaxing hotel amenity
- Teamwork-impeding trait
- Motown legend
- Ross
- High school music group leader
- Sag
- Smartphone symbol
- Anger
- Vocal hoarseness
- Covered with blacktop
- ___ Parks Day (Feb. 4 or Dec. 1)
- Crumb-carrying insect
- Scene-shooting attempt
- Crossed pair on a pirate flag
- Wastebasket
- The ___ (satirical news website)
- Wall St. debut
- Some HP products
- Domino effect
- ___ chamber
- Roller coaster track make-up
- Pastel color to turquoise
- "That's false!"
- Apple music players



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10/19

DOWN

- Make pricier on eBay
- Comedian Skinner
- "For Pete's sake!"
- Poseidon or Ryuji
- Solemn promise
- Cologne brand
- Best Team or Best Game, e.g.
- Tiled artwork
- Board game with tweezers
- Stuff applied to surfboards
- Tricky
- Unruly crowds
- Pretend
- High jump
- Actress Espinosa
- Like Hel and Odin
- Vicinity

ACROSS

- Up-tempo jazz genre
- Olympian Melissa Wu, e.g.
- Skating surface
- Tinkertoy connector
- Half of fan fiction's Drarry
- Entered hurriedly
- Birds that can lay 3-pound eggs
- "Gal" or "pen" follower
- Alias-preceding initials
- ___ v. Wade
- Tekkamaki fish
- Voting collective
- TV deskmate
- Meadows
- "Skip me"
- Fit of ___ (annoyed state)
- Go "1, 2, 3 ..."

DOWN

- Inhalation organ
- Observe
- Ramadan, say
- Ensembles
- "___ me think ..."

Friday's Answer



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10/16

1. 2253

2. 327

3. 769

4. 472467

5. 632

6. 84639273

7. 887647

8. 7828

1. 2855

2. 327

3. 7645

4. 427637

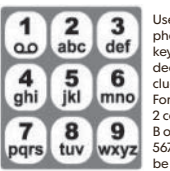
5. 7333

6. 887647

7. 828

Today's theme

Agriculture



Use the phone keypad to decode the clues. For example: 2 could be A, B or C, and 5/6/7/8 could be LOST

Friday's solution

WORD ROUNDUP

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

10/19

Find and Circle:

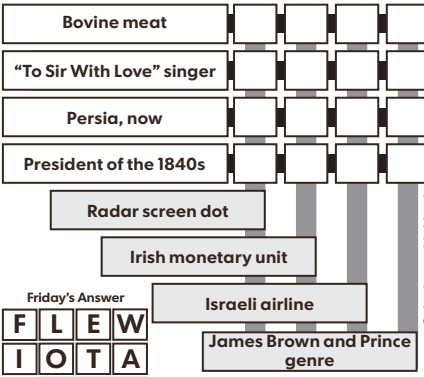
- Nine South American countries
- Two synonyms for "speedy"
- Region; district
- Without toppings or adornments
- New South Wales, for example

Friday's answer: COVER TITLE FAIR DEAL CLUB / HYPHEN PERIOD COMMA COLON / HOUR WEEK YEAR / MARINES ARMY NAVY / GOTHAM CITY

QUICKCROSS

By John Wilmes

10/19

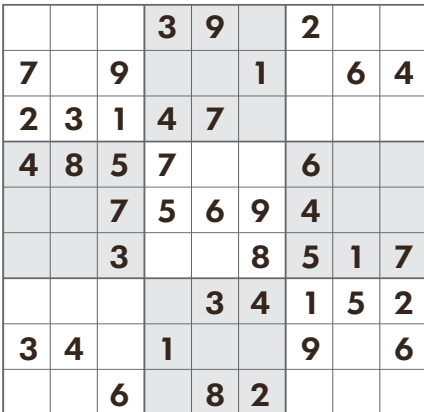


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QUICKCROSS ON YOUR PHONE puzzles.usatoday.com

SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 (no repeats).

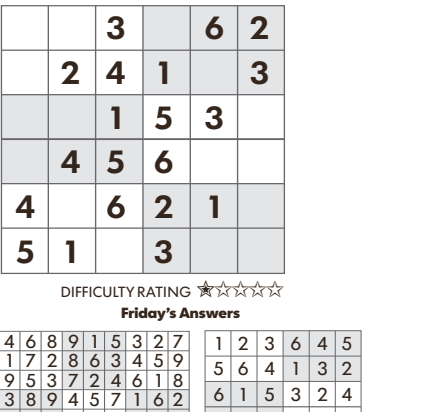


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10/19

DIFFICULTY RATING ★☆☆☆☆

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x2 box contains the numbers 1 through 6 (no repeats).



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10/16

DIFFICULTY RATING ★☆☆☆☆

DON'T QUOTE ME

Actress Mae West shares this perspective.

Rearrange the words to complete the quote.

BUT DO ENOUGH LIVE ONCE RIGHT YOU

ONLY ONCE, IF YOU IT, IS

10/19

Friday's Answer: "Problems are the price of progress. Don't bring me anything but trouble. Good news weakens me." - Charles Kettering

© WIGGLES 3D GAMES

TELEVISION NEWS & VIEWS

‘The West Wing’ special stays on message

Cast, creator reunite to help get out the vote

Kelly Lawler
USA TODAY

It wasn’t hard to get the cast of “The West Wing” back together.

“‘The West Wing’ cast is pretty close,” says Aaron Sorkin, who created NBC’s 1999-2006 political drama about a Democratic president and his White House staff. “Pre-COVID, we would find each other and have a drink or dinner once in a while. We email.”

So when Sorkin wanted to get Rob Lowe, Dulé Hill, Allison Janney, Janel Moloney, Richard Schiff, Bradley Whitford and Martin Sheen back together, it was an easy sell. The original cast of the series (minus John Spencer, who died in 2005), along with some high-profile guest stars, brings the Bartlet White House back to life in HBO Max’s “A West Wing Special to Benefit When We All Vote” (now streaming). The special aims to increase voter turnout, and is produced in partnership with former first lady Michelle Obama’s get-out-the-vote organization.

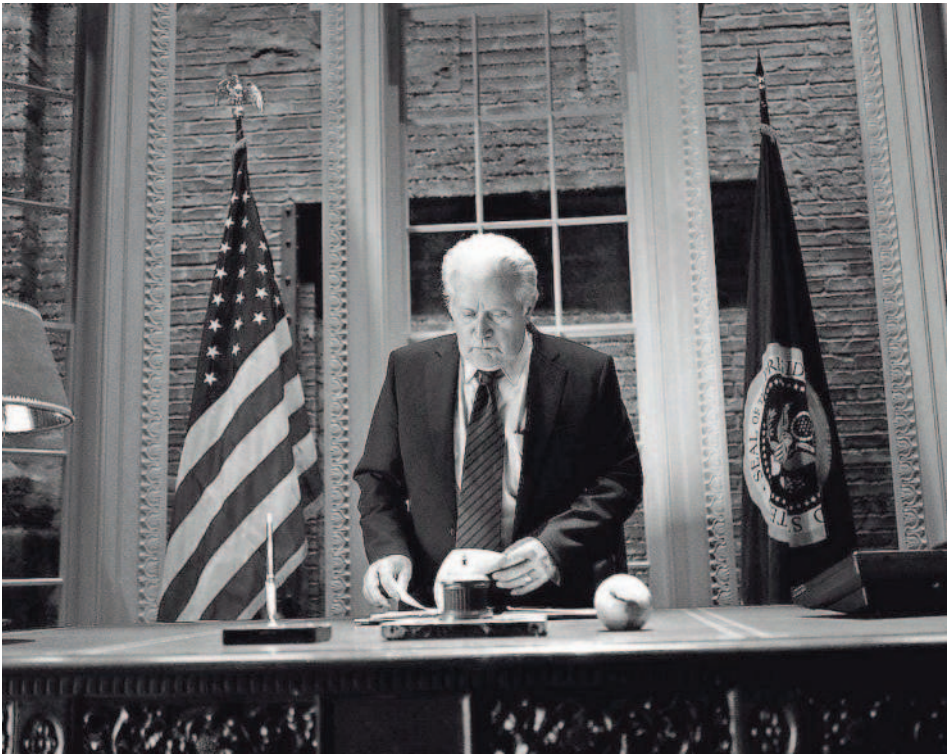
Unlike some awkward reunions and revivals of the past few years (“BH 90210”), the “West Wing” special is smooth and slick, beautifully staged and acted. Seeing the original cast together, accompanied by Sterling K. Brown taking on Spencer’s role of Leo, even in a pared-down set, is emotional, gratifying and comforting in a world changed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Sure, everyone’s a little older and grayer, and there is even more disconnect between the politics of the show and real-world politics, but for fans of the show and its exceptional cast, it is a cathartic release. It’s wonderful and heartwarming to see recurring guest stars from the White House staff and press pool return to read a few lines.

“I was thinking how much things change in 60 seconds,” Sheen says as Bartlet at the beginning of the episode, and it’s hard not to feel like he’s speaking about how much things have changed since the episode first aired in 2002 (the special is a reimagining of Season 3’s “Hartsfield’s Landing”). But Sheen and company slide back into their roles with remarkable ease.

The “staged table read” involves more props and sets than audiences might have expected, and it’s a perfectly



Sorkin



The President is back. Martin Sheen sits in a makeshift Oval Office to reprise his role as President Jed Bartlet on “A West Wing Special.” HBO MAX PHOTOS



Robe Lowe and Allison Janney return to their “West Wing” roles of Sam and C.J. for “A West Wing Special” on HBO Max.



Sterling K. Brown joins the cast as Leo McGarry. John Spencer, who originated the role, died during the final season of “West Wing.”

suitable stand-in for the actual Season 3 episode.

“It started out as something smaller,” Sorkin says. “When all the theaters shut down (because of the COVID pandemic), I wanted to see if I could get ‘The West Wing’ cast together just to do a Zoom table read to raise money for an organization called The Actors Fund. But then the ground, which had already been shifting under our feet, seemed to shift quicker.”

From protests after the deaths of unarmed Black people at the hands of police to the high stakes of the 2020 presidential election, which he calls an

“emergency,” Sorkin was moved to be more ambitious, and proactive, with a reunion.

“We wanted to see if we could do something a little more,” he says. “We wanted to see if we could push voters to

the polls.”

Sorkin, original “West Wing” director Thomas Schlamme and producer Casey Patterson bring his vision to life. He and Schlamme reimagine the Season 3 episode as a stage play, and filmed it this month at the Orpheum Theater in Los Angeles. Instead of commercial breaks, scenes are broken up by get-out-the-vote messages by figures including Samuel L. Jackson and President Bill Clinton to “West Wing” actors not featured in the special, including Elisabeth Moss. Emily Mallory Procter, who played fan favorite Ainsley Hayes, reads the stage directions.

Sorkin chose to revisit this Season 3 episode, which takes place at the beginning of Bartlet’s (Sheen) re-election campaign, because it is an “ode to voting,” he says. During the episode, Donna (Moloney), spends much of her time trying to get just one family in New Hampshire to vote for Bartlet, while the president teaches Sam (Lowe) about international relations and governance.

“It also has the added advantage of being a very contained episode,” Sorkin says. “It all takes place on ‘The West Wing’ set, and (has) only a couple of guests. It all takes place in one night. What (Schlamme) did was he took an episode of the show and he completely restaged it as a play.”

The producers praised Brown as a worthy stand-in for Spencer as White House chief of staff Leo McGarry. In a prologue to the special, Whitford introduces Brown as the star of a little TV show known as “the Emmy Awards.”

“John was not only this incredible actor, but he was also a really wonderful human being,” Schlamme says. “And he was also joyous, and he loved the craft of acting. ... I would love to have shared with John, ‘We’re going to get Sterling K. Brown to play your character!’ Because I know (he’d say), ‘Aw shucks, that’s a great idea, Tommy, that’s a really wonderful idea.’ (He’d) be so supportive of that.”

Sorkin hopes the special can persuade at least one person who wasn’t going to vote to change their mind.

“One of the things that ‘The West Wing’ was always able to do was to remind people that the institutions of our democracy are great things, but they need to be populated by competent people who consider public service to be a calling,” he says.

“We want to get one person who wasn’t going to vote, who was just going to flake, who just didn’t think their vote matters, to vote. (Then) we’ll consider it a success.”

STREAMING

Radha Blank follows her ‘Version’ of a creative muse

Filmmaker doesn’t have to explain her path

Rasha Ali
USA TODAY

Radha Blank was tired Wednesday, but she immediately perked up during an interview when we deviated from a list of by-now standard questions about her debut film, Netflix’s “The Forty-Year-Old Version” (now streaming).

“We all know what it’s about,” she insists, and the audience it’s made for – Black people and New York creatives – will get it.

In the autobiographical film, Blank, 44, stars as Radha, a New York playwright and teacher about to turn 40 who decides to pursue rapping after failing to find commercial success in theater. “Version” follows Radha as she questions who she is and what she’s willing to compromise, while contemplating the “white gatekeepers as a Black creative and asking questions about who gets to tell an authentic Black story.”

“It feels like when I speak to somebody, they want me to convince them of something. They want me to convince them that I did actually bust my (expletive) in making the film, convince them that Lena (Waithe, who produced Blank’s film as well as “Queen and Slim”) wholeheartedly got behind the film without me having to beg or convince,” Blank says. “If you like the film, what else is there to say?”

So Blank and I talked instead about the Black artists who inspire her. Like Carrie Mae Weems, Kerry James Marshall, Amy Sberald and Titus Kaphar. Blank says she’s sometimes envious of them because they get to make art, put it on display and walk away from it.



Radha Blank, the star and director of “The Forty-Year-Old Version,” now streaming on Netflix, says the autobiographical film was made for Black people and New York creative types. JEONG PARK/AP

“Sometimes I wish film was regarded more like a painting ... it says who it is once you look at it.”

Radha Blank

“I actually feel like painters are smart to not talk too much about the work because then it changes what you’re seeing ... too much talking and too much explaining can get in the way of the actual work,” Blank says. “Sometimes I wish film was regarded more like a painting ... it says who it is once you look at it. I can explain things away, it doesn’t change

what the film is.”

Although Blank’s “Version” is catapulting her into the spotlight, she’s not worried about breaking into Hollywood. Rather, she wants to break away from it: Blank says she’s trying to remain an artist “in an industry that doesn’t know what to do with art.”

She understands that movies require resources to get off the ground, but her voice and her art don’t “belong to the person who financed the film.”

“I think they’re so busy with monetizing, capitalizing, commodifying art. It’s great when you don’t get something. It’s great when an artist says ‘This is what I want to do’ in spite of everyone saying ‘That’s too much or that’s too risky’... for who?!” (Blank says she’s been told her film needed more rap, or

shouldn’t be in black and white.)

She is grateful her film is resonating with audiences, but whether people like it doesn’t change who she is and the art she made. And though “Version” has received rave reviews (a 98% rating on review site Rotten Tomatoes), Blank says she doesn’t take them personally, because “it has nothing to do with what I want to say and what I want to say next.”

And what happens if people don’t watch her movie due to bad reviews? That’s perfectly fine, too. She trusts those who appreciate the film will tell a friend about it, and that speaks louder than the critics, she says.

Blank says she just wants to tell more stories and “demystify” the process for filmmakers because it can be intimidating, and hopes her experience can push others to make their own movies. One important thing she wants to get out there is her advice to any 20-year-old Black female filmmaker.

“Brace yourself, because no matter how hard you work, people will still underestimate your ability to make something great. Don’t take that personally, and make sure to focus on the love that you have now. Don’t waste your breath trying to convince somebody to love you; go where the love is now,” Blank says, explaining that Waithe didn’t try to change her vision.

Other advice: Study the work of Andrea Arnold and Jean-Luc Godard, and from there, create your own syllabus.

“Do not wait for it to come from outside of you. It’s already there,” Blank says. “If I knew that sooner, maybe I’d be making a ‘30-Year-Old Version.’ I don’t regret anything. Everything has led me to this moment, but it does create some questions for me about how do I move forward in an industry that I think is used to cookie cutter.”

BOOK REVIEW

A romance dissected in ‘A Lover’s Discourse’

Eliot Schrefer
Special to USA TODAY

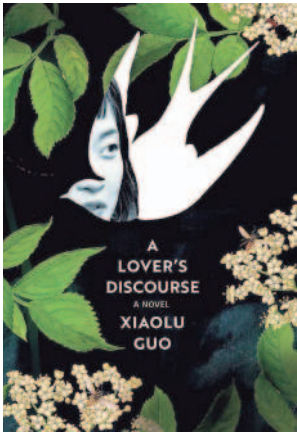
Do we feel we belong once we have a sense of place or does the feeling instead come from our relationships? Xiaolu Guo tackles this and other heady questions in her new book, “A Lover’s Discourse” (Grove, 288 pp., ★★☆☆), which follows an unnamed young woman who moves to London and simultaneously has to adapt to a foreign culture and to a foreign lover.

Not officially named memoir or fiction, “A Lover’s Discourse” opens in a United Kingdom roiled by Brexit, when our young Chinese academic glimpses an Australian-German man picking elderflowers beside a public park. The terse, occasionally devastating vignettes that follow are addressed to that man and track the relationship that ensues. She’s immediately drawn to him. As her parents are dead and she has made few English friends over the

course of pursuing her Ph.D., the “you” of the book becomes her main source of companionship and, ultimately, romance.

Guo borrows her title from philosopher Roland Barthes’ classic, and like Barthes, she is interested in how the perception of a relationship can carry as much weight as the relationship itself. Through her precise and unflinching language, a revealing account emerges of how one mind opens to another, how it processes each decision and moment of wondering. “When does a physical relationship begin? It is when the lovers kiss or when they imagine their kissing beforehand?”

The protagonist’s academic interests feature heavily, too. That results in some riveting sequences, as when she returns to China to study a town whose residents are professional art copyists. Those chapters are a profound meditation on the meaning of originality in the face of convincing facsimiles, which



Author
Xiaolu Guo.
STEPHEN BARKER

Novels about love affairs often are named romances, but the most distinctive quality of “A Lover’s Discourse” is how unromantic it is. As the protagonist addresses her boyfriend, we get a sense of the good and bad of their relationship, recounted in tones that never turn sentimental nor vindictive. This unflagging honesty results in some startling, powerful imagery, as when the author discusses her pregnancy: “I wondered whether I would get used to this peculiar state of being – carrying a fertilized egg and walking around as it grew limbs and body parts?”

Given how fully the book gives itself over to examining him, the “you” lover remains disappointingly vague by the end of “A Lover’s Discourse.” Of course, that may well be the book’s intent, to explore whether we can ever truly know the people we sleep with or spend our lives with, if true belonging might always be out of reach for those who find themselves in a new land.

TONIGHT ON TV

	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
NETWORK								
ABC	Dancing with the Stars The 11 remaining couples dance to a variety of songs, including "Sorry" by Justin Bieber; Judge Derek Hough and Hayley Erbert perform a special dance. (N)				Emergency Call An intruder tries to break into a home; a driver goes on a crime spree. (N)		Local Programs	Jimmy Kimmel Live
CBS	Big Brother Newly selected Head of Household nominates two other houseguests for eviction. (N)		One Day at a Time Human sexuality.	One Day at a Time Lydia's discovery.	Manhunt: Deadly Games Eric Rudolph escapes when he's identified and pursued by the FBI.		Local Programs	The Late Show with Stephen Colbert
Fox	L.A.'s Finest The detectives try to transport Knox's fentanyl into police custody. (N)		Filthy Rich Ginger and mother are put in lockdown; Paul and Eric work with investors. (N)		Local Programs			
NBC	The Voice Pop star Gwen Stefani joins coaches Kelly Clarkson, John Legend and Blake Shelton in the iconic red chairs as they return for the 19th season of "The Voice." (N) (Season premiere)				Weakest Link (N)		Local Programs	The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon (N)
PBS	Antiques Roadshow Ky. sugar chest.		Tell Me More with Kelly Corrigan (N)		Independent Lens A man's fight to reclaim Pepe the Frog. (N) (Season premiere)			Amanpour (N)
CW	Whose Line?	Whose Line?	Penn & Teller: Fool Us Shawn Farquhar.		Local Programs			
ION	NCIS: Los Angeles Russian missile system at risk.		NCIS: Los Angeles Informant arrested.		NCIS: Los Angeles Missing Mosley.		NCIS: Los Angeles State Department.	
Telemundo	El Domo del Dinero El gran premio. (N)		Todo por mi hija		Falsa identidad Víctimas de Mateo. (N)		Noticias Telemundo (N)	Noticias Telemundo (N)
Univision	Médicos, línea de vida		Imperio de mentiras		Dulce ambición		Noticiero Univisión (N)	Noti. Univ. Ed. noc. (N)
CABLE								
A&E	The First 48 Young mother killed & disposed of.		The First 48 Double-shooting in New Orleans.		The First 48 Double murder; killers may strike again.		The First 48 Before Christmas a family is murdered.	
AMC	Halloween H20: 20 Years Later A killer pursues his young nephew. Jamie Lee Curtis, Adam Arkin (1998)				Soulmates Unexpected soulmate. (N)		Soulmates Woman learns husband not her soulmate.	
Animal Planet	Homestead Rescue: Survival Shelter Home in middle of flood zone. (N)				Homestead Rescue: Raney Ranch (N)		Building Off the Grid: Hawaii Dome House	
BBC America	Law & Order Witness is a former FBI informant.		Law & Order Police investigate sidewalk shooting.		Law & Order Suicide witnesses elude detectives.		Law & Order Victim subject to mistaken identity.	
BET	Movie (6:00)		Movie					
Bravo	Below Deck Mediterranean Last charter.		Below Deck Mediterranean (N)		Bravo's Chat Room (N)	Watch What Happens: Live (N)		Below Deck
Cartoon	Gumball	Gumball Movie fears.	Bob's Burgers Mock-trial.	Bob's Burgers	American Dad!	American Dad!	Family Guy	Family Guy Hospital.
CMT	Mom	Mom Home burglary.	Mom Bonnie's brother.	Mom Relationship woes.	Mom Different ideas.	Mom Lend money.	American Housewife	American Housewife
CNBC	Shark Tank Smoked fish dip is presented.		Shark Tank A pricing tool is pitched.		Shark Tank Radio; window; QR scanner.		Shark Tank Internet company; personal decision.	
CNN	Anderson Cooper 360° (N)		Cuomo Prime Time (N)		CNN Tonight with Don Lemon (N)		CNN Tonight with Don Lemon (N)	
Comedy	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office Reaction.	The Office News leak.	Daily Show with Trevor	The Office
Discovery	Street Outlaws: Fastest in America (N)						Street Outlaws Racing tournament. (N)	
Disney	Disney Channel	Raven's Home	Raven's Home	Jessie Masquerade party.	Jessie	Jessie Africa trip.	Sydney to the Max	Sydney to the Max
DisXD	Player Select (N)	Parker Plays	DuckTales Family rushes to protect city & Scrooge.		Big City Greens		DuckTales Darkwing investigates a conspiracy.	
DIY	Restoring Galveston Craftsman bungalow.		Restoring Galveston (N)		Restoring Galveston Fire-damage.		Restoring Galveston 1893 cottage.	
E!	Chrisley Knows Best	Chrisley Knows Best	Chrisley Knows Best	Chrisley Knows Best	Dr. 90210 (N)		Nightly Pop (N)	Dr. 90210
Food	Halloween Baking Championship		Halloween Baking Championship Costume cakes. (N)		The Big Bake: Halloween Monster cakes. (N)		Worst Cooks in America (N)	
Fox News	Tucker Carlson Tonight (N)		Hannity (N)		The Ingraham Angle (N)		Fox News @ Night(N)	
Freeform	Addams Family Values A family hires a serial killing nanny. Anjelica Huston (1993)				The Nightmare Before Christmas Ghouls try to get the hang of Christmas. (1993)		The 700 Club	
FX	Transformers: The Last Knight Transformers & humans are in a state of war, with history the key to security. Mark Wahlberg, Gemma Chan (2017)							Transformers (2017)
FXX	The Simpsons	The Simpsons	The Simpsons	The Simpsons	The Simpsons	The Simpsons	The Simpsons	The Simpsons
GSN	America Says		Master Minds		Family Feud		Family Feud	
Hallmark	American Humane Hero Dog awards: 10th Anniversary Celebration Dog award show. (N)				The Golden Girls		The Golden Girls	
HGTV	Love It or List It Tired of not having her own bedroom.		Love It or List It More space needed. (N)		Love It or List It A couple with a 100-year-old triplex.		Love It or List It A couple's home is too cramped.	
History	Pawn Stars First Continental Congress excerpts.		Pawn Stars Guys hunt for military surplus items. (N)		Pawn Stars Autographed book on Apollo 10.		Pawn Stars Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.	
HLN	How It Really Happened Football player.		Forensic Files		Forensic Files		Forensic Files	
ID	Still a Mystery 2 women vanish.		The Missing (N)		The Missing (N)		The Missing (N)	
IFC	Two and a Half Men		Two and a Half Men		Two and a Half Men		Two and a Half Men	
Lifetime	Rizzoli & Isles A bicyclist spontaneously combusts.		Rizzoli & Isles Jane plans to go undercover in a jail.		Rizzoli & Isles Jane learns of some stolen evidence.		Rizzoli & Isles A forensic accountant is murdered.	
MotorTrend	Bitchin' Rides Dave Kindig buys a 1929 roadster.		Bitchin' Rides 1968 Boss Mustang.		Bitchin' Rides Golf professional Dennis Walters' car.		Bitchin' Rides A 1968 Chevy Camaro.	
MSNBC	All in with Chris Hayes (N)		The Rachel Maddow Show (N)		The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell (N)		The 11th Hour with Brian Williams (N)	
MTV	Ridiculousness		Ridiculousness		Ridiculousness		Ridiculousness	
NatGeo	Auto Masters James Nesbitt restores a car. (N)		Auto Masters Team restores a rotting Porsche. (N)		Auto Masters A Volvo P1800 is restored. (N)		Auto Masters James Nesbitt restores a car.	
NatGeo Wild	Secrets Zoo (N)	Secrets Zoo (N)	Babies of the Zoo Baby predators.		Babies of the Zoo Large baby animals are evaluated.		Secrets Zoo	Secrets Zoo
Nick	SpongeBob	SpongeBob	Friends		Friends Ross meets Paul.		Friends	Friends Chandler's play.
OWN	Dateline on OWN Families divided.		Deadline: Crime with Tamron Hall Missing people.		Deadline: Crime with Tamron Hall Girl is kidnapped.		Dateline on OWN Murdered salesman.	
Oxygen	NCIS Murderer impersonating victim.		NCIS Dead translator with jewels in stomach.		NCIS Marine's widow gets call from husband.		NCIS An amnesiac has bombing clues.	
Paramount	Movie						Movie	
Pop	NCIS: New Orleans Search for assassin.		NCIS: New Orleans IRA bomb maker.		NCIS: New Orleans Key witness.		NCIS: New Orleans Town conspiracy.	
Science	Unearthed (N)				Secrets in the Ice		Unearthed Archeologists explore Alcatraz.	
Sundance	Caddyshack A group of young, troublesome caddies creates chaos at an upper-class golf club. (1980)				Blazing Saddles A black sheriff struggles to save his town from a pair of corrupt politicians. (1974)			
Syfy	Sinister After a novelist learns about unsolved murders, something stirs in his new home. Ethan Hawke, Juliet Rylance (2012)				Insidious: The Last Key Medium's childhood home haunted. Lin Shaye (2018)			
TBS	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy Brian's DNA.	American Dad!	American Dad!	Conan	Seinfeld
TCM	The Hound of the Baskervilles A detective investigates a recent death. (1959)			The Horror of Dracula A lawyer goes to Transylvania. Peter Cushing (1958)		The Mummy Archaeologists unleash a terrible curse.		
TLC	90 Day Fiancé: Happily Ever After? Doctor's visit. (N)		The Family Chantel Suspicious romance. (N)		The Family Chantel Pedro goes to NYC. (N)		Darcy & Stacey Twins' favorite parts of vacation. (N)	
TNT	Crazy Rich Asians An economics professor accompanies her boyfriend on a trip back home. (2018) (7:30)				Bride Wars Friends become bridezillas when their wedding plans conflict due to an error. Kate Hudson (2009)			
Travel	Mysteries of the Unknown One man's attempt to cross Berlin Wall. (N)				Doomsday Caught on Camera Exploding glacier. (N)		Doomsday Caught on Camera Threatening twister.	
TruTV	Impractical: Inside Jokes		Impractical: Inside Jokes		Grown Ups Group of former teammates gathers to pay homage to their late basketball coach. (2010)			
TV Land	Loves Raymond		Loves Raymond		Loves Raymond		The King of Queens	
USA	WWE Monday Night Raw						Modern Family	
VH1	Think Like a Man Too Michael Ealy (2014) (6:30)		About Last Night Four smitten people decide to take their relationships to the next level. Kevin Hart, Michael Ealy (2014)				Coming America (1988)	
Viceland	Escaping Polygamy Shanell's aunt.		Fringe Nation Formation & threat.		Fringe Nation Neo-Nazi threat. (N)		VICE News Tonight (N)	
WE	Criminal Minds Mothers killed.		Criminal Minds Team tracks eye-stealing serial killer.		Criminal Minds Touring rock star.		Criminal Minds Team seeks advice from horrific killer.	
Weather	Highway Thru Hell Kevin's video hobby.		Highway Thru Hell Spring layoffs.		Highway Thru Hell Season highs & lows.		Weather Gone Viral People tackle extreme elements.	
WGN America	NewsNation		NewsNation		NewsNation		NewsNation	
MUSIC NETWORKS								
Cinemax	Warrior Father Jun's new men worry Young Jun.	Rise of the Planet of the Apes After being engaged due to a misunderstood act of friendship, an ape with genetically enhanced intelligence frees his fellow apes and begins a war. Andy Serkis, James Franco (2011) (8:50)				Twilight Zone: The Movie Four directors remake eerie tales of fantasy and horror from Rod Serling's landmark TV series. Dan Aykroyd, John Lithgow (1983) (10:40)		
Encore	Taken A retired covert agent sets out to rescue his daughter from human traffickers. Liam Neeson (2009)		Total Recall After visiting a company that implants clients with fake memories, a factory worker finds himself on the run after the procedure goes awry. Colin Farrell, Kate Beckinsale (2012)				Private Parts A controversial radio personality details his rise to nationwide syndication. (1997) (11:02)	
FXM	Alpha After a young caveman is injured and left for dead while on his first hunting expedition, he works with a wolf and the two fight for survival. (2018) (7:30)		Alpha After a young caveman is injured and left for dead while on his first hunting expedition, he works with a wolf and the two fight for survival. (2018) (9:25)				Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul Road trip goes awry as Greg schemes. Jason Drucker (2017) (11:20)	
Hallmark Movies	Murder, She Baked: A Deadly Recipe Hannah & dentist probe sheriff's murder. Alison Sweeney (2016) (7:00)		Murder, She Baked: Just Desserts Another murder strikes the town of Eden Lake, as the coach of the school's basketball team is found dead after a live broadcast of Hannah's Bake-Off contest. Alison Sweeney (2017)				Murder, She Wrote After a famous mystery novelist passes away, Jessica remembers a case.	
HBO	Just Mercy A young lawyer who graduated from Harvard decides to go to Alabama. (2020) (6:35)		The Third Day Helen hears what she's been looking for; Tallulah observes violent act. (N)		We Are Who We Are Sarah encourages blossoming friendship; Richard plays mind games with Caitlin. (N)		Lovecraft Country Group learns Book of Names' origins and plans to cast the most powerful spell.	
Lifetime Movie	Into the Arms of Danger A 17-year-old girl is rescued from a car wreck only to be held captive by two brothers and their mother, who wants to replace her dead daughter. Cathy Moriarty, AlexAnn Hopkins (2020)				Deadly Daughter Switch A woman is shocked when she discovers that her biological daughter was switched at birth with another girl, whose mother finds her life falling apart. (2020)			
Showtime	The Good Lord Bird		The Gentlemen An expatriate builds a profitable marijuana business in London, but when he tries to cash out of the business, an array of schemes and blackmail arises. Matthew McConaughey, Charlie Hunnam (2020)				The Good Lord Bird	The Comedy Store
Starz	The Spanish Princess James IV.	Seduced: Inside the NXIVM Cult India Oxenberg discusses NXIVM and her evolution into a cult's sex slave.		Tyler Perry's Madea's Big Happy Family After a woman receives an upsetting health report, her aunt must help her gather together her distracted children to share the news with them. Tyler Perry (2011) (9:47)				The Spanish Princess James IV.
TMC	Top Gun A cocky fighter pilot falls for an instructor at an elite combat training school where he seeks to prove he is the best of the best. Tom Cruise, Kelly McGillis (1986)				Risky Business A teen opens a brothel to help pay for damages done to his father's sports car. Tom Cruise, Rebecca De Mornay (1983)		War Agent seeks revenge against a hit-man. (2007)	
SPORTS NETWORKS								
ESPN	Monday Night Football Arizona Cardinals at Dallas Cowboys from AT&T Stadium (Live)						SportsCenter with Scott Van Pelt	
ESPN2	Top Rank Boxing Teofimo Lopez vs. Vasily Lomachenko from MGM Grand in Las Vegas						UFC Countdown UFC 254: Khabib vs. Gaethje	
FS1	To Be Announced Info unavailable.		To Be Announced Info unavailable.		When New York Was One: The Yankees, The Mets		PBA Bowling PBA Playoffs: Round of 16	
Golf	PGA Tour Golf 2020 THE CJ CUP @ SHADOW CREEK - Final Round from Shadow Creek Golf Course in Las Vegas						Golf Central	Golf Central
MLB	To Be Announced	MLB Tonight	To Be Announced	MLB Tonight	To Be Announced	MLB Tonight	To Be Announced	MLB Tonight
NBA	NBA Special	NBA Action	NBA Special		NBA Special		NBA Special	
NBCSports	Australian Poker Open		Australian Poker Open		Australian Poker Open		Australian Poker Open	
NFLN	Postgame Show (Live)	NFL GameDay Final		NFL GameDay Final		NFL GameDay Final	NFL Total Access An inside look at all 32 teams.	

MOVIES

SPORTSLINE



KIRK FERENTZ BY IOWA CITY PRESS-CITIZEN

FIRST WORD

“We respectfully decline your monetary and personnel demands.”

University of Iowa general counsel Carroll Reasoner, in a formal reply to a letter from civil rights attorney Damario Solomon-Simmons representing eight Black former University of Iowa football players who are seeking \$20 million in compensation and for athletics director Gary Barta, head coach Kirk Ferentz and assistant coach Brian Ferentz to be fired over what they contend was intentional racial discrimination during their Hawkeyes careers. Reasoner said the football program had previously taken steps to implement some of the demands. According to the letter obtained by The Des Moines Register, the group also demands attorney’s fees; the creation of a permanent Black male senior administrator position in Iowa athletics; mandatory anti-racist training for athletics staff; the establishment of a board of advisers including Black players and anti-racist professionals to oversee the football program; and tuition waivers for any Black athlete who did not graduate with a degree during Kirk Ferentz’s 22-year tenure.

NOTABLE NUMBERS

6 Current major league franchises without a World Series title, starting with Tampa Bay, which can end that drought starting Tuesday as the American League pennant winner. Others without a ring: Colorado, Seattle, Milwaukee, San Diego, Texas.

4 Clemson players who threw a pass, including the punter, in Saturday’s 73-7 win over Georgia Tech. Four is the same number of Georgia Tech players who caught a pass. Clemson had 17 players catch a pass, including Amari Rodgers with six catches for 161 yards and two touchdowns.

44 Points by which Clemson is favored over Syracuse this week, according to betMGM.com. That line cannot be going over well with the Orange. The number 44 is mythical in Syracuse. According to Cuse.com, the 11 players who have worn it since 1954 include Jim Brown, Ernie Davis and Floyd Little. It was retired in 2005. Syracuse is the last ACC team to beat Clemson, 27-24 on Oct. 13, 2017.

306 Consecutive PATs for Georgia by six kickers dating to 2014. Jack Podlesny went 3-for-3 Saturday at Alabama as the Bulldogs broke the record set by Auburn, which held the mark at 304 before missing last season. It was a rare Georgia bright spot in a 41-24 loss to the Tide.

679 Days since Tampa Bay tight end Rob Gronkowski caught a TD prior to Sunday, when he scored off a Tom Brady pass late in the second quarter to put the Buccaneers ahead of Green Bay 28-10.

LAST WORD

“I’m a fighter. I’ve got to dig in deep.”

Teofimo Lopez after scoring a unanimous, 12-round decision Saturday over Vasilii Lomachenko. The 23-year-old from Brooklyn (16-0) became the unified lightweight champion, adding the three titles held by Lomachenko (15-2) to the belt he won last year.

From staff and wire reports

Alabama steamrolls ahead

Paul Myerberg
USA TODAY

In beating Georgia 41-24, Alabama proved that not even the best college football defense can slow down the most potent example of the Southeastern Conference’s offensive revolution. While Georgia continued to reveal flaws in Alabama’s defense, the Crimson Tide gained 564 yards, had nine plays of 15 or more yards and had two scoring plays of 40 or more yards against a defense that entered the weekend leading the Football Bowl Subdivision in yards allowed per carry, per play and per game.

After initially pushing back against these offensive concepts, Nick Saban’s full-on embrace of an up-tempo and fast-paced style, combined with an unstoppable collection of talent at the skill positions, has allowed Alabama to paper over any defensive deficiencies and



Alabama’s John Metchie III and DeVonta Smith (6) celebrate Metchie’s TD against Georgia. Smith had two TDs. GARY COSBY JR./THE TUSCALOOSA NEWS

remain the team to beat in the SEC.

Saban’s first championship team, which went unbeaten in 2009, ran the ball 63% of the time. The 2011 and 2012 teams ran 59% and 63%, respectively. The totals have dropped across the past three years: to 56% in 2018, 52% in 2019

Clemson, Alabama still 1-2

Alabama’s impressive performance in its prime-time showdown with Georgia earned the Crimson Tide a couple of more first-place votes, but not enough to overtake Clemson for the No. 1 position in the Amway Coaches Poll. Clemson, which put up 73 points in a pounding of Georgia Tech, holds the top spot on 52 of the 62 ballots. Alabama received eight first-place votes, just three more than last week. – Eddie Timanus ● **Amway Coaches Poll, 4C**

and 53% this season.

Against Georgia, Alabama threw the ball 33 times for 417 yards and had 147 rushing yards on 43 carries, with 18 carries and just two pass attempts in the

See ALABAMA, Page 5C



Buccaneers quarterback Tom Brady had two touchdown passes Sunday as the Buccaneers rallied to rout the unbeaten Packers 38-10 at Raymond James Stadium. KIM KLEMENT/USA TODAY SPORTS

Brady, Bucs wallop undefeated Packers

Jarrett Bell
USA TODAY

TAMPA, Fla. – Tom Brady tapped into the perfect formula to get the best of Aaron Rodgers.

Lean on the Bucs defense. Check. Find Rob Gronkowski in key moments. Done.

Keep mistakes to a minimum. And how.

Brady did his part, too, passing for 166 yards and two touchdowns, as the Buccaneers (4-2) knocked the Packers

from the ranks of the unbeaten with a convincing 38-10 verdict.

Green Bay (4-1) seemed ready to lay the tracks for a rout in sprinting to a 10-zip lead, but the Bucs quickly turned the game by intercepting Rodgers on back-to-back possessions in the second quarter – the first returned 32 yards by Jamel Dean for a touchdown.

Besides snagging the first interceptions this season off Rodgers, the Bucs sacked the quarterback four times. Rodgers completed 16 of 35 passes for 160 yards with no touchdowns, two in-

terceptions and a passer rating of 35.4 – the second-worst rating of his career, after a 34.4 showing at Buffalo in 2014.

The Bucs also did a number on Aaron Jones, holding him to 15 yards.

A shootout featuring marquee quarterbacks? Hardly. Tampa Bay scored 38 unanswered points to turn the matchup into a lopsided laughter. Both quarterbacks were pulled for the final six minutes.

Also noticeable: The Bucs, the most

See PACKERS, Page 5C

‘Damn-good’ Rays thinking first title



Bob Nightengale
Columnist
USA TODAY

SAN DIEGO – The folks on Madison Avenue have no interest in lining them up for endorsements. The national cable TV networks have snubbed them all year.

The Rays could care less what anyone thinks of them.

All they know is that you’re about to see a whole lot more of them in October, on baseball’s biggest stage.

The Rays are moving on to the World Series for the second time in franchise history after knocking off the defending

American League champion Astros 4-2 Saturday in Game 7 of the AL Championship Series.

“We’re a small-market team,” said Rays center fielder Kevin Kiermaier, their longest-tenured player. “We’re not the most popular team out there. We don’t have too many household names that a ton of people are going to know, but at the same time people are making a name for themselves. And if they don’t know the names by now, they better learn them, because we’ve got some boys who can play.”

So go ahead and criticize their style of play, but the Rays are going to keep winning the only way they know how, playing spectacular fundamental baseball.

Tampa Bay was up 3 games to 0 in the series but recovered in time to make

sure it didn’t join the 2004 Yankees as the only teams to blow the lead in a best-of-seven series.

“There was a lot of anxiety,” Rays manager Kevin Cash said. “I don’t know if I went to bed. Believe me, we’ve all watched the ESPN documentary ‘Four Days in October.’ I didn’t want to see it again. ...

“If you watch us play day in and day out, we’ve got a special group of players and personalities who really enjoy playing the game and playing the game with each other.”

The Rays don’t have any marquee stars, although Randy Arozarena is quickly becoming one. He hit his seventh postseason homer in the first inning and became the first rookie posi-

See NIGHTENGALE, Page 5C

Logano wins, clinches Cup final spot

Dave Skretta

The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — Joey Logano spent the final 40-plus laps Sunday at Kansas Speedway keeping an eye on Kevin Harvick in his rearview mirror.

Now, he can look ahead to the NASCAR Cup Series finale at Phoenix.

Using every bit of the track Sunday to hold off the winningest driver this season, Logano took the checkered flag on a cold, blustery Sunday to secure a spot in the championship round of the playoffs. Harvick was followed across by Alex Bowman and Brad Keselowski as post-season contenders swept the top four spots in the opener of the round of eight.

“It’s on your mind every lap. You come into this race knowing if you win this thing you have an amazing advantage,” said Logano, who experienced the same perk on his way to the 2018 title. “I



Joey Logano celebrates after winning the Hollywood Casino 400 Sunday at Kansas Speedway.

JAMIE SQUIRE/GETTY IMAGES

can’t believe it, especially the way the beginning of the race was going, running back there around 10th and not scoring any stage points.”

Harvick, who already has won nine times this season, kept pulling up to Logano’s bumper after the final restart for a caution brought out by Tyler Reddick. But he simply couldn’t make a pass stick as Logano moved all over the track to block him while taking advantage of lapped traffic that kept Harvick from making a clear run.

“We just needed to get off pit road first. It came down to controlling that restart,” Harvick said.

Just none of them worked to get around Logano, who picked up his third win of the season and first since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Oh, and one of his other wins this season? Phoenix, where Logano will now race for a title.

“I spent more time looking in the mirror than I did looking in the windshield there,” he said of his late duel with Harvick. “I thought if I could hold him off

the first 15 laps, I would have a chance.”

Kyle Busch was fifth and Chase Elliott, who won the opening stage, wound up sixth after dealing with radio problems that at one point caused him to mistakenly pit. Elliott tried using a backup radio and even resorted to hand signs with his team on pit road to convey what he wanted done with the car.

Ryan Blaney, William Byron, playoff driver Martin Truex Jr. and Christopher Bell rounded out the top 10.

Harvick’s second-place run was good for his own championship hopes. He now has a 41-point cushion over the cut line with two races left before the championship, while Denny Hamlin is 20 points above it after a mistake caused him to brush the wall and he wound up 15th. Keselowski is eight points above Elliott, the first driver below the cut line. Bowman is 27 below, Truex 31 and Kurt Busch 73 back after blowing his engine.

SCOREBOARD

All times ET

MLB

LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES (Best-of-7)

American League Tampa Bay 4, Houston 3 At San Diego

Oct. 11: Tampa Bay 2, Houston 1
Oct. 12: Tampa Bay 4, Houston 2
Oct. 13: Tampa Bay 5, Houston 2
Oct. 14: Houston 4, Tampa Bay 3
Oct. 15: Houston 4, Tampa Bay 3
Oct. 16: Houston 7, Tampa Bay 4
Oct. 17: Tampa Bay 4, Houston 2

National League Atlanta 3, L.A. 3 At Arlington, Texas

Oct. 12: Atlanta 5, Los Angeles Dodgers 1
Oct. 13: Atlanta 8, Los Angeles Dodgers 7
Oct. 14: Los Angeles Dodgers 15, Atlanta 3
Oct. 15: Atlanta 10, Los Angeles Dodgers 2
Oct. 16: Los Angeles Dodgers 7, Atlanta 3
Oct. 17: Los Angeles Dodgers 3, Atlanta 1
Sunday: Atlanta vs. Los Angeles Dodgers

WORLD SERIES Best-of-7; x-if necessary Arlington, Texas

All games on Fox

Tuesday: Tampa Bay vs. Los Angeles Dodgers or Atlanta vs. Tampa Bay, 8:09 p.m.
Wednesday: Tampa Bay vs. Los Angeles Dodgers or Atlanta vs. Tampa Bay, 8:08 p.m.
Friday: Los Angeles Dodgers vs. Tampa Bay or Tampa Bay vs. Atlanta, 8:08 p.m.
Saturday: Los Angeles Dodgers vs. Tampa Bay or Tampa Bay vs. Atlanta, 8:08 p.m.
x-Oct. 25: Los Angeles Dodgers vs. Tampa Bay or Tampa Bay vs. Atlanta, 8:08 p.m.
x-Oct. 27: Tampa Bay vs. Los Angeles Dodgers or Atlanta vs. Tampa Bay, 8:08 p.m.
x-Oct. 28: Tampa Bay vs. Los Angeles Dodgers or Atlanta vs. Tampa Bay, 8:09 p.m.

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	4	1	0	0.800	139	142
Miami	3	3	0	0.500	160	113
New England	2	3	0	0.400	109	110
N.Y. Jets	0	6	0	0.000	75	185

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tennessee	5	0	0	1.000	164	126
Indianapolis	4	2	0	0.666	157	115
Houston	1	5	0	0.166	146	182
Jacksonville	1	5	0	0.166	125	181

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	5	0	0	1.000	156	94
Baltimore	5	1	0	0.833	179	104
Cleveland	4	2	0	0.666	163	187
Cincinnati	1	4	1	0.250	129	157

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	4	1	0	0.800	149	110
Las Vegas	3	2	0	0.600	153	150
Denver	2	3	0	0.400	100	110
L.A. Chargers	1	4	0	0.200	110	125

NATIONAL CONFERENCE East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Dallas	2	3	0	0.400	163	180
Philadelphia	1	4	1	0.250	141	175
N.Y. Giants	1	5	0	0.166	101	152
Washington	1	5	0	0.166	108	162

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	4	2	0	0.667	177	122
New Orleans	3	2	0	0.600	153	150
Carolina	3	3	0	0.500	138	141
Atlanta	1	5	0	0.166	162	184

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Chicago	5	1	0	0.833	128	116
Green Bay	4	1	0	0.800	162	139
Detroit	2	3	0	0.400	133	143
Minnesota	1	5	0	0.166	155	192

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Seattle	5	0	0	1.000	169	135
L.A. Rams	4	1	0	0.800	136	90
Arizona	3	2	0	0.600	128	102
San Francisco	2	3	0	0.400	124	114

Sunday's Games

Tennessee 42, Houston 36, OT
N.Y. Giants 20, Washington 19
Indianapolis 31, Cincinnati 27
Atlanta 40, Minnesota 23
Chicago 23, Carolina 16
Detroit 34, Jacksonville 16
Pittsburgh 38, Cleveland 7
Denver 18, New England 12
Baltimore 30, Philadelphia 28
Miami 24, N.Y. Jets 0
Tampa Bay 38, Green Bay 10
L.A. Rams at San Francisco
Open: L.A. Chargers, Las Vegas, New Orleans,

Monday's Games

Kansas City at Buffalo, 5 p.m.
Arizona at Dallas, 8:15 p.m.
Thursday's Game
N.Y. Giants at Philadelphia, 8:20 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 25
Buffalo at N.Y. Jets, 1 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Tennessee, 1 p.m.
Green Bay at Houston, 1 p.m.
Cleveland at Cincinnati, 1 p.m.
Carolina at New Orleans, 1 p.m.
Detroit at Atlanta, 1 p.m.
Dallas at Washington, 1 p.m.
Seattle at Arizona, 4:05 p.m.
Kansas City at Denver, 4:25 p.m.
San Francisco at New England, 4:25 p.m.
Jacksonville at L.A. Chargers, 4:25 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Las Vegas, 8:20 p.m.
Open: Baltimore, Indianapolis, Miami, Minnesota

Monday, Oct. 26

Chicago at L.A. Rams, 8:15 p.m.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Saturday's Scores EAST

Liberty 38, Syracuse 21
Temple 39, South Florida 37
West Virginia 38, Kansas 17

SOUTH

Alabama 41, Georgia 24
Alabama Birmingham 37, W. Kentucky 14
Clemson 73, Georgia Tech 7
Florida St. 31, North Carolina 28
Georgia Southern 41, Massachusetts 0
Jacksonville State 24, North Alabama 17
Kentucky 34, Tennessee 7
Marshall 35, Louisiana Tech 17
Memphis 50, Central Florida 49
Miami 31, Pittsburgh 19
North Carolina State 21, Duke 20
Navy 27, East Carolina 23
North Texas 52, Middle Tennessee 35
South Alabama 30, Texas State 20
South Carolina 30, Auburn 22
Texas A&M 28, Mississippi State 14
Troy 31, E. Kentucky 29
Virginia Tech 40, Boston College 14
Wake Forest 40, Virginia 23

MIDWEST

Cent. Arkansas 33, Missouri State 24
Notre Dame 12, Louisville 7

Southwest

Arkansas 33, Mississippi 21
Army 28, Texas-San Antonio 16
Stephen F. Austin 31, Angelo State 12

SOCCER

MLS Eastern Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Toronto FC	11	2	5	38	29	17
Philadelphia	10	3	5	35	32	16
Columbus	9	4	4	31	27	14
Orlando City	8	2	7	31	29	17
N. England	7	4	7	28	20	16
NYC FC	8	7	3	27	23	16
New York	7	7	3	24	21	22
Nashville	5	6	6	21	15	17
Chicago	5	8	5	20	24	28
Montreal	6	10	2	20	27	35
Atlanta	5	9	4	19	18	21
Miami CF	5	10	3	18	18	27
Houston	4	7	7	19	25	30
D.C. United	2	10	6	12	15	32

Western Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Seattle	9	4	3	30	35	17
Portland	9	5	3	30	37	29
Sporting KC	9	6	3	30	31	25
LA FC	7	7	3	24	39	33
FC Dallas	6	4	6	24	22	17
Minnesota	6	5	5	23	26	21
San Jose	6	7	5	23	28	31
Vancouver	7	11	0	21	22	39
Salt Lake	5	7	6	21	24	29
Colorado	5	4	4	19	25	20
Houston	4	7	7	19	25	30
LA Galaxy	4	9	3	15	21	34

Oct. 17

Sporting Kansas City 2, Chicago 2, tie
Miami at Montreal, 7 p.m.

Sunday

New York City FC at Columbus
Orlando City at New York
D.C. United at Cincinnati
Atlanta at Toronto FC
Houston at Minnesota
Real Salt Lake at Colorado p.p.d.
Los Angeles FC at Portland
Vancouver at L.A. Galaxy
Seattle at San Jose

Monday's Game

Philadelphia at New England, 7:30 p.m.
Tuesday's Game
FC Dallas at Nashville, 8:30 p.m.

English Premier League

	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Everton	4	1	0	14	7	13
Aston Villa	4	0	0	12	2	12

Liverpool	3	1	1	13	13	10
Leicester	3	0	2	12	8	9
Arsenal	3	0	2	8	6	9
Tottenham	2	2	1	15	8	8
Chelsea	2	2	1	13	9	8
West Ham	2	1	2	11	7	7
Leeds	2	1	1	9	8	7
Man City	2	1	1	7	7	7
Southampton	2	1	2	8	9	7
Newcastle	2	1	2	7	9	7
Crystal Palace	2	0	2	6	8	7
Man United	2	0	2	9	12	6
Wolverhampton	2	0	2	4	7	6
Brighton	1	1	3	9	11	4
Sheffiled	0	1	4	2	7	1
West Brom	0	1	3	5	13	1
Fulham	0	1	4	4	12	1
Burnley	0	0	3	3	8	0

Oct. 17

Everton 2, Liverpool 3
Chelsea 3, Southampton 2
Man City 1, Arsenal 0
Newcastle 1, Man United 4

Sunday

Sheffiled United 1, Fulham 1
Crystal Palace 1, Brighton 1
Tottenham 3, West Ham 3
Aston Villa 1, Leicester 0

Monday's Games

West Brom vs. Burnley, 12:30 p.m.
Leeds vs. Wolverhampton, 3 p.m.

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Portland	3	0	1	10	10	3
Houston	3	1	0	9	12	7
Washington	2	1	1	7	5	4
N. Carolina	1	1	2	5	8	10
Chicago	1	2	1	4	7	7
Reign FC	1	2	1	4	6	8
Orlando	0	2	2	2	5	8
Utah	0	2	2	2	3	8

Oct. 17
North Carolina 3, Orlando 3, tie
Reign FC 2, Utah 0

AUTO RACING

NASCAR Cup Series Hollywood Casino 400 At Kansas Speedway Kansas City, Kan.

Lap length: 1.50 miles (Start position in parentheses)
1. (2) Joey Logano, Ford, 267 laps, 42 points.
2. (4) Kevin Harvick, Ford, 267, 48.
3. (6) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet, 267, 46.
4. (8) Brad Keselowski, Ford, 267, 47.
5. (20) Kyle Busch, Toyota, 267, 33.
6. (1) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet, 267, 47.
7. (9) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 267, 45.
8. (10) William Byron, Chevrolet, 267, 29.
9. (5) Martin Truex Jr., Toyota, 267, 34.
10. (22) Christopher Bell, Toyota, 267, 27.
11. (17) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet, 267, 26.
12. (21) Matt DiBenedetto, Ford, 267, 29.
13. (16) Aric Almirola, Ford, 267, 24.
14. (13) Cole Custer, Ford, 267, 23.
15. (7) Denny Hamlin, Toyota, 267, 40.
16. (3) Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Chevrolet, 267, 21.
17. (32) John H. Nemechek, Ford, 267, 20.
18. (24) Bubba Wallace, Chevrolet, 267, 19.
19. (26) Michael McDowell, Ford, 267, 18.
20. (11) Erik Jones, Toyota, 267, 23.
21. (21) Chris Buescher, Ford, 267, 16.
22. (28) Ryan Newman, Ford, 267, 15.
23. (29) Corey Lajoie, Ford, 267, 14.
24. (25) Ty Dillon, Chevrolet, 266, 13.
25. (15) Tyler Reddick, Chevrolet, 266, 12.
26. (12) Clint Bowyer, Ford, 266, 12.
27. (27) Daniel Suarez, Toyota, 265, 10.
28. (35) Brennan Poole, Chevrolet, 263, 9.
29. (19) Ryan Preece, Chevrolet, 262, 8.
30. (34) JJ Yeley, Chevrolet, 261, 0.
31. (14) Jimmie Johnson, Chevrolet, 261, 6.
32. (33) James Davison, Ford, 258, 5.
33. (31) Quin Houff, Chevrolet, 258, 4.
34. (37) Timmy Hill, Toyota, 256, 0.
35. (39) Josh Billicki, Chevrolet, 254, 0.
36. (36) Reed Sorenson, Chevrolet, 250, 1.
37. (38) Joey Gase, Ford, 228, 0.
38. (3) Kurt Busch, Chevrolet, engine, 197, 3.
39. (40) Chad Finchum, Toyota, transmission, 154.
40. (30) Matt Kenseth, Chevrolet, accident, 144, 1.

Race Statistics
Average Speed of Race Winner: 138.329 mph.
Time of Race: 2 hours, 53 minutes, 43 seconds.
Margin of Victory: 0.312 seconds.
Caution Flags: 6 for 31 laps.
Lead changes: 17 among 11 drivers.
Lap Leaders: C.Elliott 0-27; W.Byron 28-30; K.Harvick 31-63; C.Elliott 64-83; D.Hamlin 84-86; C.Elliott 87; D.Hamlin 88-124; B.Keselowski 125-130; K.Busch 131-132; M.DiBenedetto 133-144; R.Newman 145; D.Hamlin 146-163; Ky.Busch 164-167; J.Logano 168-169; K.Harvick 170-201; C.Lajoie 202; K.Harvick 203-222; J.Logano 223-267

Leaders Summary (Driver, Times Led, Laps Led): K.Harvick, 3 times for 85 laps; D.Hamlin, 3 times for 58 laps; C.Elliott, 3 times for 48 laps; J.Logano, 2 times for 47 laps; M.DiBenedetto, 1 time for 12 laps; B.Keselowski, 1 time for 6 laps; Ky.Busch, 1 time for 4 laps; W.Byron, 1 time for 3 laps; Ku.Busch, 1 time for 2

laps; R.Newman, 1 time for 1 lap; C.Lajoie, 1 time for 1 lap.
Wins: K.Harvick, 9; D.Hamlin, 7; B.Keselowski, 4; C.Elliott, 3; J.Logano, 2; M.Trux, 1; A.Bowman, 1; Ku.Busch, 1; A.Dillon, 1; R.Blaney, 1; W.Byron, 1; C.Custer, 1.
Top 15 in Points: 1. K.Harvick, 4067; 2. D.Hamlin, 4054; 3. B.Keselowski, 4035; 4. C.Elliott,

GOLF

PGA Tour C.J. Cup Saturday At Shadow Creek Golf Course North Las Vegas, Nev. Purse: \$9.75 million Yardage: 7,527; Par: 72 Third Round

Russell Henley	66-68-67-201
Lanto Griffin	70-68-66-204
Talor Gooch	70-65-69-204
Jason Kokrak	70-66-68-204
Xander Schauffele	66-64-74-204
Jason Day	70-70-66-206
Justin Thomas	72-66-68-206
Tyrell Hatton	65-68-73-206
Collin Morikawa	71-65-71-207
Brooks Koepka	74-69-65-208
Rory McIlroy	73-69-6

NFL

Dalton ‘anxious’ as Dallas turns page

Jori Epstein
USA TODAY

FRISCO, Texas – The buzz was palpable. Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott was back at the Star for medical treatment early Thursday morning, just a few days after surgery for a compound fracture and dislocation of his right ankle. Teammates and coaches were thrilled to catch a smile on the face of the player whom they’d last seen carted off the field of AT&T Stadium, his ankle in a sterile splint, tears streaming down his face.

“The reaction everybody has that he’s here ... speaks volumes about him as a man and just the electricity that he brings to our football team,” head coach Mike McCarthy said Thursday. “You can never take for granted the presence and the command of Dak Prescott.”

Then Prescott left the Star for a post-operation visit with his doctor. The Cowboys resumed their practice schedule, the quarterbacks opening with their usual series of indoor drills that McCarthy calls “quarterback school.” Andy Dalton cycled through footwork, target practice and two-minute drills. Rookie Ben DiNucci followed. No. 4 was missing.

“It was definitely noticeable,” McCarthy said. “Frankly, it hit me (then). But you have to turn the page on all injury situations. I think we were so fortunate and blessed to have Andy Dalton.”

Fortunate, perhaps, is a generous word for the Cowboys’ backup quarterback arrangement. No doubt the Cowboys are thrilled to have a three-time Pro Bowler and nine-season starter to replace Prescott, who will miss the rest of the season beginning Monday against the Cardinals (8:15 ET, ESPN). But the acquisition of Dalton was intentional. A veteran backup was a priority when the Cowboys hired McCarthy, executive vice president Stephen Jones said.

“When Coach McCarthy came in, he obviously really was fired up about Dak,” Jones said Friday on Dallas radio station 105.3. “But at the same time, his goal with us when we started working through the roster, what his strategies were at Green Bay and how he had success – his thought process was one, he’d like to draft one and (the) other: get a more veteran-type quarterback.

“He understood our cap situation, and we probably weren’t going to be in the mix for the backup quarterbacks that required bigger dollars.”

Dalton was still available after the draft, and even better, he was living with his family nearby in North Texas. The Cowboys believed they were investing in quality when they paid \$3 million guaranteed plus incentives. Dalton believed a one-year deal would allow him, if not to play, then to at least assess a less bloated quarterback market in the 2021 offseason.



Cowboys coach Mike McCarthy says of his injured quarterback, “You can never take for granted the presence and the command of Dak Prescott.”

When Dalton came on for Prescott in the third quarter against the Giants, his message to teammates was clear.

“He’s coming in here to win every time he comes into the huddle,” said receiver Michael Gallup, who caught 19- and 38-yard passes from Dalton on the game-winning drive. “That’s the first thing he says: I came here to win. I came here to play. So, let’s do it.

“That’s all I really need to know.”

‘Andy’s been Andy’

Gallup joins a long list of teammates and coaches who want to be clear: There is no replacing Prescott.

“Definitely, you don’t just forget about Dak,” Gallup said. “The best thing you can do is obviously keep Dak in the loop. You got to send him some texts, go there and see him, make sure he still has his spirits up. But at the same time, you got to put all your focus on Andy.”

Running back Ezekiel Elliott, Prescott’s draft classmate and close friend, has begun striking this balance. Outside team hours last week, Elliott visited Prescott daily, acknowledging that Prescott was working through pain and “a little loopy” but “definitely in good spirits.” Elliott brainstormed ways to ensure Prescott stays involved rather than be isolated due to the injury and coronavirus risks. While at the facility, Elliott focused on the crisp offense the Cowboys hope will balance run and pass than the first five weeks.

“We have a lot of pieces in this offense,” said Elliott, who will compete as a pro without Prescott for the first time Monday. “I think we should still be one of the best offenses in the league.”

What the Cowboys are losing in Prescott is a leader who started 69 consecutive regular-season contests during which he completed 66% of his passes for 17,634 yards, 106 touchdowns and 40

interceptions. He scored 25 more touchdowns running (24) and receiving (one). Through roughly four and a half games this year, Prescott led the league in passing.

What the Cowboys gain in Dalton is a quarterback who earned Pro Bowl berths in 2011, 2014 and 2016. He took Cincinnati to the postseason four times but also oversaw four consecutive losing seasons before departing. Dalton left Cincinnati with 70 wins in 133 tries, completing 62% of his passes for 31,705 yards, 204 touchdowns and 118 interceptions

Dalton’s vocal approach to Week 6 meetings did not surprise teammates. His film study and body maintenance routines have been honed across 10 professional seasons. He had not tweaked his habits because he spent the first five games largely on the sideline. He’d already felt comfortable speaking up in quarterback and team meetings while Prescott was healthy, “just to make sure everybody is clear on everything.”

Rookie receiver CeeDee Lamb and veteran pass rusher Aldon Smith arrived at the same description of Dalton’s demeanor this week.

“Andy’s been Andy,” each said in his own media availability.

Dalton laughed when asked to explain that.

“I’m being myself, I’m being how I was, I was running scout team so the same way I was in the huddle there is the same thing I’m bringing to the first group running our offense and everything. I’m just trying to be myself throughout that whole process. I think that’s what everybody means by that.”

McCarthy described it as a “direct” leadership style: “He has a very, very smart way of getting his point across in as few words as possible. And Andy’s a guy that everybody loves. How do you not?”



Andy Dalton brings plenty of experience as he steps in for Prescott. PHOTOS BY TIM HEITMAN/USA TODAY SPORTS

‘Force Andy Dalton to beat us’

Dalton’s first start in Dallas comes against a 3-2 Arizona team that ranks fifth in the league with 20.4 points per game allowed and fourth in passing yards allowed at 222.4. The Cowboys could look to Elliott more to set up the run, against which since Arizona ranks 19th at 124.2.

Cardinals Pro Bowl cornerback Patrick Peterson said his defense prefers Dalton try to beat them.

“We definitely got to stop the run and force, not saying he can’t do it, but we have to force Andy Dalton to beat us,” Peterson said on his “All Things Covered” podcast last week. “We feel if you take the ball out of Ezekiel Elliott’s hands, there’s more opportunities for bad things to happen when the ball is in the air versus the ball getting carried.”

A 2-3 Cowboys team has bigger issues with Arizona than whether Dalton, with three star receivers, can score. Dallas’ offensive line is down three starters this season and its defense is allowing a league-worst 36 points per game. Just two weeks ago, the Cowboys ceded a franchise-record 307 rushing yards in a 49-38 loss to the Browns. Enter Cardinals quarterback Kyler Murray, who leads all quarterbacks with 296 rushing yards and five rushing touchdowns.

McCarthy said he was more concerned about DiNucci being ready to back up Dalton than Dalton integrating seamlessly into Dallas’ game plan. Dalton and offensive coordinator Kellen Moore were in constant communication through the week, working toward a game script Dalton was comfortable with.

“We don’t see things changing much,” Dalton said Friday. “I feel like we can just run this offense. I’ve been in a lot of different systems and kind of been through it all so I like everything that we’re doing and my job is to keep this thing exactly how Dak had it. Dak was playing really well and we don’t feel like we want there to be any drop-off since he’s not going to be in there.

“I feel like we still have a lot of good football left, and I’m anxious to go show that the rest of the season.”

Bills must regroup quickly versus Chiefs



Sal Maiorana
Rochester (N.Y.)
Democrat and Chronicle
USA TODAY Network

In their first true test as it pertains to their viability as a legitimate AFC championship contender, the Bills went splat in Tennessee.

Yes, 42-16 on a national stage was not a good look Tuesday night, and it was somewhat shocking because had you watched the first four games, you wouldn’t have thought a performance like that was possible.

Anyone who might have questioned the Bills’ 4-0 start based on suspect competition should have seriously re-examined that take by the end of last Sunday before the game in Tennessee was played.

True, the Jets are a laughingstock, but Miami is proving to be vastly improved as FitzMagic lives on, the Rams certainly look like an NFC contender, and the Raiders just beat the defending Super Bowl champion Chiefs. That 4-0 beginning was solid.

That’s why the Titans’ dismantling of Buffalo, despite them having barely



The Bills will have to keep an eye on Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce, who has 32 receptions for 405 yards and three TDs. DENNY MEDLEY/USA TODAY SPORTS

practiced for two weeks, was disconcerting because it was a total team meltdown. The Bills’ offense finally faced adversity, the defense continued a disturbing trend of ineffectiveness, and the special teams put forth their worst performance of the season.

Now, after that beat-down, comes

the first pivotal moment of the season, as we’re about to learn a whole lot about what the Bills are made of as they host Patrick Mahomes and Kansas City on Monday (5 ET, Fox and NFL Network).

“These are the moments that make you stronger,” coach Sean McDermott said of taking one on the chin and trying

to bounce back. “You learn from adverse times in your life, and I’ve said to the players before, I’d rather have a player that’s been through things, been through stuff in their lives, than a player who hasn’t, because I know they’ve had to deal with some stuff in their life.

“I think that just builds that resiliency and that mental fortitude if you will, that mental toughness that we all need to accomplish what we’re trying to accomplish here.”

This is a game that has been circled on the Bills’ calendar since the moment the schedule was released in April. If the Bills were going to be truly worthy of the expectations placed on them – heir apparent to the Patriots in the AFC East once Tom Brady migrated south to Tampa Bay – then this was going to be a game where they needed to prove it.

Well, the game has arrived – albeit four days later than originally scheduled – and with a loss already in the books to the Titans, the Bills can’t afford one to the Chiefs. Not only because of how it affects their quest for the division title, because the Patriots aren’t backing down, but when you start looking down the road at seeding in the AFC playoffs, head-to-head losses are killers because it’s the first tiebreaker.

Mickelson 2-for-2 on Champions tour

Adam Woodard
Golfweek | USA TODAY Network

It was a Sunday southpaw skirmish in the final round of the Dominion Energy Charity Classic, and the man they call Lefty emerged victorious.

Playing in his second PGA Tour Champions event after winning his debut in August, Mickelson outdueled fellow Masters champion Mike Weir at Country Club of Virginia's James River Course in Richmond, winning the 54-hole event at 17 under after an impressive 7-under-par 65 in the final round. All three rounds were played on the

weekend due to excessive rain Friday.

The 50-year-old senior circuit rookie entered Sunday play three strokes behind Weir and got off to a hot start, making birdie on four of his opening seven holes. He took a one-shot lead on the par-3 13th with a par after Weir made bogey and extended the lead to two with a birdie on No. 15. A tap-in birdie on No. 16 moved him to 16 under for the tournament and Lefty never looked back, ending his week with a birdie.

Mickelson joins Bruce Fleisher and Jim Furyk as the only players to win their first two starts on the senior tour. Furyk did so earlier this year.

Weir finished second at 14 under.

European Tour: Adrian Otaegui is no stranger to winning golf tournaments.

The 27-year-old Spaniard now has three titles on the European Tour after Sunday's Scottish Championship victory. What makes this one at Fairmont St Andrews unique? It's Otaegui's first 72-hole stroke play win.

Otaegui began the tournament with a 62 on Thursday and ended his title pursuit with a Sunday 63, overcoming a four-shot deficit with eight birdies over an 11-hole stretch to finish atop the leaderboard at 23 under, four shots ahead of 54-hole leader Matt Wallace (-19).



Phil Mickelson waves after making birdie at the seventh hole Sunday en route to winning the Dominion Energy Charity Classic. TRACY WILCOX/PGA TOUR



Week 7 football poll; times p.m. Eastern

- 1. Clemson (5-0)**
Points: 1,540 (52 first-place votes).
Previous ranking: 1. Next: Sat. vs. Syracuse (ACC, noon). Last week: Beat Georgia Tech 73-7.
- 2. Alabama (4-0)**
Points: 1,494 (8 first-place votes). Prev.: 2. Next: Sat. at Tennessee (CBS, 3:30).
LW: Beat then-No. 3 Georgia 41-24.
- 3. Notre Dame (4-0)**
Points: 1,351. Prev.: 4. Next: Sat. at Pittsburgh (ABC, 3:30). LW: Beat Louisville 12-7.
- 4. Georgia (3-1)**
Points: 1,295. Prev.: 3. Next: Oct. 31 vs. Kentucky. LW: Lost to then-No. 2 Alabama 41-24.
- 5. Ohio State (0-0)**
Points: 1,254 (2 first-place votes). Prev.: 5. Next: Sat. vs. Nebraska (Fox, noon).
LW: Idle.
- 6. Oklahoma State (3-0)**
Points: 1,149. Prev.: 7. Next: Sat. vs. No. 18 Iowa State (Fox, 3:30). LW: Idle.

- 7. Penn State (0-0)**
Points: 1,059. Prev.: 8. Next: Sat. at Indiana (FS1, 3:30). LW: Idle.
- 8. Florida (2-1)**
Points: 1,002. Prev.: 9. Next: Oct. 31 at Missouri. LW: Idle.
- 9. Texas A&M (3-1)**
Points: 1,001. Prev.: 11. Next: Oct. 31 vs. Arkansas. LW: Beat Mississippi State 28-14.
- 10. Cincinnati (3-0)**
Points: 989. Prev.: 10. Next: Sat. at No. 16 SMU (ESPN2, 9). LW: Idle.
- 11. Brigham Young (5-0)**
Points: 890. Prev.: 13. Next: Sat. vs. Texas State (ESPN, 10:15). LW: Beat Houston 43-26.
- 11. Miami (4-1)**
Points: 890. Prev.: 12. Next: Sat. vs. Virginia (ACC, 8). LW: Beat Pittsburgh 31-19.
- 13. North Carolina (3-1)**
Points: 725. Prev.: 6. Next: Sat. vs. No. 22 North Carolina State (ESPN, noon). LW: Lost to Florida State 31-28.
- 14. Wisconsin (0-0)**
Points: 698. Prev.: 15. Next: Fri. vs. Illinois (BTN, 8). LW: Idle.
- 15. Oregon (0-0)**
Points: 683. Prev.: 16. Next: Nov. 7 vs. Stanford. LW: Idle.
- 16. SMU (5-0)**
Points: 618. Prev.: 18. Next: Sat. vs. No. 10 Cincinnati (ESPN2,9). LW: Beat Tulane 37-34.

- 17. Michigan (0-0)**
Points: 507. Prev.: 19. Next: Sat. at No. 21 Minnesota (ABC, 7:30). LW: Idle.
- 18. Iowa State (3-1)**
Points: 485. Prev.: 20. Next: Sat. vs. No. 6 Oklahoma State (Fox, 3:30). LW: Idle.
- 19. Kansas State (3-1)**
Points: 395. Prev.: 22. Next: Sat. vs. Kansas (FS1, noon). LW: Idle.
- 20. Virginia Tech (3-1)**
Points: 373. Prev.: 23. Next: Sat. at Wake Forest. LW: Beat Boston College 40-14.
- 21. Minnesota (0-0)**
Points: 209. Prev.: 25. Next: Sat. vs. No. 17 Michigan (ABC, 7:30). LW: Idle.
- 22. North Carolina State (4-1)**
Points: 200. Prev.: Not ranked. Next: Sat. vs. No. 13 North Carolina (ESPN, noon). LW: Beat Duke 31-20.
- 23. Southern California (0-0)**
Points: 186. Prev.: 24. Next: Nov. 7 vs. Arizona State. LW: Idle
- 24. Coastal Carolina (4-0)**
Points: 150. Prev.: Not ranked. Next: Sat. vs. Georgia Southern (ESPNU, noon). LW: Beat then-No. 21 Louisiana Lafayette 30-27.
- 25. Marshall (4-0)**
Points: 139. Prev.: Not ranked. Next: Sat. vs. Florida Atlantic. LW: Beat Louisiana Tech 35-17.

Dropped teams: No. 14 Auburn (2-2); No. 17 Tennessee (2-2); No. 21 Louisiana Lafayette (3-1).

Big Ten coach tests presumed positive for COVID-19

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. – Purdue coach Jeff Brohm returned a presumed positive COVID-19 result during the team's daily antigen testing protocols Sunday, the school announced. The football program is awaiting confirmation via a PCR test, which could take up to 24 hours. According to the news release, Brohm informed his coaching staff and team Sunday afternoon and is currently at home in isolation. Brohm and the Boilermakers are scheduled to begin the 2020 season – along with the rest of the Big Ten – Saturday. Purdue hosts Iowa at Ross-Ade Stadium.

– Mike Carmin, Lafayette (Ind.) Journal and Courier

Others receiving votes: Auburn (2-2) 93; Army (5-1) 90; West Virginia (3-1) 64; Kentucky (2-2) 60; Oklahoma (2-2) 59; Liberty (5-0) 57; Memphis (2-1) 53; Utah (0-0) 48; Iowa (0-0) 48; Alabama-Birmingham (4-1) 42; Boise State (0-0) 37; Louisiana Lafayette (3-1) 31; Arkansas (2-2) 29; Tennessee (2-2) 25; TCU (1-2) 22; Air Force (1-0) 14; Texas (2-2) 12; South Carolina (2-2) 12; Tulsa (1-1) 10; Arizona State (0-0) 10; Washington (0-0) 8; Missouri (1-2) 7; LSU (1-2) 7; California (0-0) 6; Boston College (3-2) 6; Nebraska (0-0) 5; Indiana (0-0) 5; Florida State (2-3) 4; Stanford (0-0) 3; Central Florida (2-2) 1.

The Amway Board of Coaches is made up of 62 head coaches at Football Bowl Subdivision schools. All are members of the American Football Coaches Association.

WEATHER

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TODAY'S FORECAST

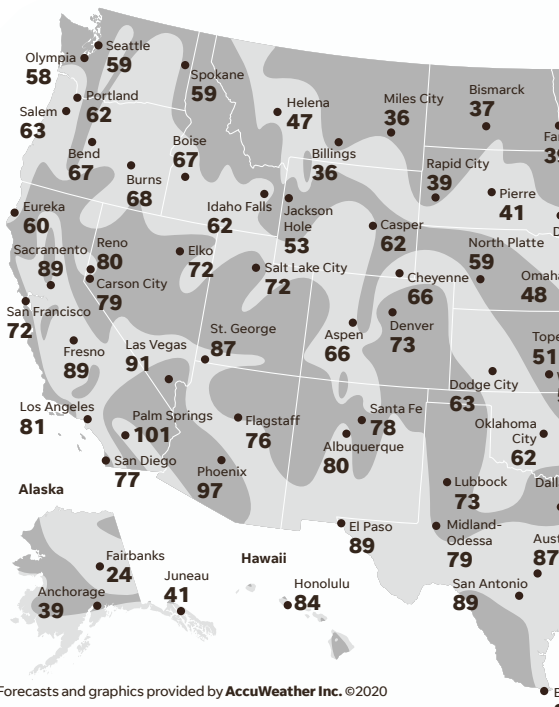
As the **Northeast** coast stays dry and turns milder today, interior areas will be cool, cloudy and wet.

Showers are expected to extend southwestward into the **Ohio** and middle **Mississippi** valleys with thunderstorms possible from eastern **Texas** to western **Kentucky**.

Dangerous rip currents and coastal flooding will batter Florida's east coast with widespread showers across the peninsula. The rest of the **Southeast** will be dry and pleasant.

Unseasonably cold air will linger across the **North Central** states, with snow in the northern **Plains** and **Montana**.

TODAY'S HIGH TEMPERATURES



Packers

Continued from Page 1C

penalized team in 2019 and tied for the most infractions through the first five weeks of 2020, didn't draw a yellow flag.

Titans 42, Texans 26 (OT): Derrick Henry took a direct snap and ran 5 yards for a touchdown 3:30 into overtime and the Titans remained undefeated in Nashville. The Titans (5-0) overcame two turnovers, Stephen Gostkowski having a field goal blocked and missing another, and the defense giving up 335 yards passing and four touchdown passes to Deshaun Watson.

Watson's final TD pass put Houston (1-5) up 36-29 with 1:50 left, but a two-point conversion attempt failed. Ryan Tannehill, who had three of his 19 career winning drives to start this season, drove the Titans 76 yards before finding A.J. Brown on a 6-yard TD pass with four seconds left. Gostkowski made the extra point. Henry, last season's rushing leader, ran for 202 yards in regulation, including a 94-yard TD sprint. In overtime, he took a screen pass 53 yards on the second play. He capped the six-play, 82-yard drive with a Wildcat snap for his second TD, finishing with 212 yards rushing and 52 yards receiving.

Steelers 38, Browns 7: James Conner ran for 101 yards and a touchdown and the Steelers battered the visiting Browns (4-2) to improve to 5-0 for the first time since 1978. Ben Roethlisberger added 162 yards passing and a score. Pittsburgh emphatically ended Cleveland's four-game winning streak and extended the Browns' skid at Heinz Field to 17 and counting.

Broncos 18, Patriots 12: Brandon McManus kicked six field goals and linebacker Malik Reed came up with a big sack late in a game twice delayed following positive coronavirus tests for both teams. Sunday's game was originally scheduled for last week. New England (2-3) rallied from an 18-3 deficit and nearly pulled off the comeback but had three turnovers. Drew Lock finished 10 of 24 for 189 yards in his first start for Denver (2-3) since injuring his shoulder in a Week 2 loss to Pittsburgh. He was steady early but had back-to-back interceptions in the fourth quarter to let the Patriots back into the game.

Bears 23, Panthers 16: Nick Foles threw for one touchdown and ran for an-



The Titans celebrate the game-winning TD by running back Derrick Henry, holding the ball, in overtime against the Texans. ANDREW NELLES/TENNESSEAN.COM

other and Chicago's defense forced three turnovers and sacked Teddy Bridgewater four times. Foles finished with 198 yards passing and a touchdown and David Montgomery added 58 yards on the ground for the Bears (5-1). The Panthers (3-3) had their three-game winning streak snapped.

Giants 20, Washington 19: Joe Judge and the Giants (1-5) have finally won, and they have rookie Tae Crowder and a risky gamble by Washington coach Ron Rivera for making them relevant again. Crowder, the last player taken in the NFL draft – Mr. Irrelevant – scooped up a fumble and ran 43 yards for a TD with 3:28 to play. The game wasn't decided until Rivera rolled the dice after a 22-yard TD pass from Kyle Allen to Cam Sims with 36 seconds left. Instead of playing for overtime, Rivera had Washington (1-5) go for the win with a two-point conversion. Allen found no one open, scrambled to his left and had his pass under pressure fall incomplete.

Falcons 40, Vikings 23: Julio Jones returned from injury to catch two of Matt Ryan's four touchdown passes as Atlanta got its first victory of the season – one week after the firing of head coach Dan Quinn. Atlanta (1-5) turned three

Kirk Cousins interceptions into 17 points to build a 20-0 lead at the break. The depleted Vikings (1-5) surrendered 40-plus points for the second time this year after going five seasons in a row without any such games.

Colts 31, Bengals 27: After trailing 21-0, Philip Rivers rallied Indianapolis (4-2) with three TD passes, including the go-ahead score on the first play of the fourth quarter. It's the fifth time the Bengals (1-4-1) have blown a 21-point lead, their second-worst all time. Rivers wound up 29 of 44 with 371 yards and one interception.

Lions 34, Jaguars 16: Rookie D'Andre Swift ran for a career-high 116 yards and two TDs, and Matthew Stafford got an elusive TD pass against the only team he hadn't thrown one against in 12 NFL seasons. Detroit (2-3) made this one look easy. Jacksonville (1-5) has now lost five straight.

Dolphins 24, Jets 0: Ryan Fitzpatrick threw three TD passes and host Miami (3-3) held New York (0-6) without a third-down conversion until the fourth quarter to get their first shutout in six years. Dolphins rookie Tua Tagovailoa made his NFL debut in mop-up duty with 2:27 left.

Ravens close door on Eagles' late threat

Mike Jones
USA TODAY

PHILADELPHIA – The Ravens held off a late charge by the Eagles to escape Lincoln Financial Field with a 30-28 victory Sunday.

Leading 17-0 at halftime, the Ravens appeared on their way to a blowout. But the Eagles rallied and threatened to force overtime before just falling short on a failed two-point conversion.

There still are some troubling aspects about the Ravens, particularly the offense.

Lamar Jackson may be an elite-level talent, but unless he's running circles around opponents, this offense lacks explosiveness through the air. It appears teams are figuring out how to minimize the threats that wide receiver Marquise Brown and tight end Mark Andrews pose.

Brown had a quiet day, recording only four catches for 57 yards, and Andrews managed just two catches for 21 yards. The Ravens have yet to find a consistent third option. Early in the game, Jackson connected with Devin Duvernay, Miles Boykin and Nick Boyle while directing a 75-yard scoring drive capped by a touchdown pass to Boyle. But things cooled off from there, and the Ravens struggled to manufacture any sort of downfield passing attack as the Eagles utilized a high safety to take away the deep threat. And when they needed to put the Eagles away with a time-consuming, chain-moving drive, the Ravens could not, and Philly pulled within striking distance before falling short.

Jackson has yet to record a 300-yard passing game this season, and Sunday marked his fourth consecutive game with fewer than 200 yards. That recipe may work for most regular-season games, but not so much against elite opponents, or when the Ravens have to play from behind.

Nightengale

Continued from Page 1C

tion player to be named ALCS MVP.

"He is the best player on the planet," said Kiermaier, who played in his first game since being hit in the wrist in Game 4. "It's incredible."

The Rays' payroll is the third-lowest lowest in MLB at \$27.4 million, with the smallest fan base, playing in an antiquated stadium.

No one will ever confuse them with the 1927 Yankees, the "Big Red Machine," or the Braves of the 1990s, but, man, can they play baseball.

"The Rays are a damn good team," Astros pitcher Lance McCullers said. "They've been the best team in the American League all season. They went through the Yankees. They went through us."

The Rays might be baseball's poster boys for the analytic world, with their openers, four-man outfielders, no traditional closer and platoon at nearly every position, but they win the old-school way. Their starting pitchers can shut down anyone, as veteran Charlie Morton proved, winning his major league-record fourth consecutive winner-take-all-game. He shut the Astros out for 5 ½ innings, giving up two hits. He is 4-0



Rays left fielder and ALCS MVP Randy Arozarena celebrates the clinching victory Saturday against the Astros. JAYNE KAMIN-ONCEA/USA TODAY SPORTS

with a 0.47 ERA in elimination games.

He was second pitcher to win Game 7 for one team – the Astros in the 2017 World Series – and then facing the same team in another Game 7, joining Roger Clemens, who did it with the Red Sox and Yankees.

"He's unbelievable," said Rays shortstop Willy Adames. "Every time he's on the mound, we have a lot of confidence

in him. We trust him. He's a true professional."

Morton, 37, barely even broke a sweat in this game. He gave up a two-out single to Michael Brantley in the first inning and retired 14 consecutive batters. Yet after a walk and an infield single, Cash turned to his vaunted bullpen.

Their bullpen, with a record 13 relievers producing saves, is deep and talent-

ed. Nick Anderson, who gave up five hits the entire season, picked up where Morton left off, pitching two scoreless innings. Pete Fairbanks came in with two outs and two runners on in the eighth and finished them off.

And, oh, how they play defense better than anyone in the game, turning 10 double plays in the ALCS.

When the Rays were eliminated in five games by the Astros a year ago in the AL Division Series, they knew they'd be back to the postseason, with nothing less than a World Series championship in their sights.

"We learned a lot playing five games against Houston," Cash said. "There were things in those experiences and playing in that environment that led our guys to believe that we can really be right in the thick of things coming into the 2020 season. And they really have taken that approach the entire season long and postseason."

Now, with only the Dodgers or the Braves standing in the way of their first World Series title, the Rays have a bandwagon of believers.

"We don't really worry about what people say on the outside," outfielder Austin Meadows said. "We know how good we are. We can compete with anybody. The goal was not just getting past the first or second round, but winning it all. We have a really good shot."

Alabama

Continued from Page 1C

fourth quarter. The game's biggest plays came via the passing game, including the 90-yard touchdown pass in the third quarter from Mac Jones to receiver Jaylen Waddle, which allowed Alabama to reclaim a 27-24 lead.

Once the other quarterback in Alabama's 2017 recruiting class behind former starter Tua Tagovailoa, Jones has developed into the nation's most efficient passer and one of the top contenders for the Heisman Trophy.

Georgia quarterback Stetson Bennett

struggled after a hot start. Bennett led the Bulldogs on four consecutive scoring drives in the first and second quarters, one featuring an 82-yard TD pass, to put Georgia ahead 24-20 at halftime. But he threw interceptions on back-to-back drives in the third quarter, and Alabama capitalized.

If not close to the traditional standard of defensive excellence set by the early teams of this dynasty, Alabama's defense is opportunistic. And in a setting where the opposing offense has to become one-dimensional to keep pace, this defense has the athletes on the edge and in the secondary to quickly turn field position and the complexion of a close game.

Saturday night's game showed two national powers in contrast: Alabama with the unstoppable offense and the good-enough defense, and Georgia with the defense that set the tone for the offense.

The win showed that Alabama's offense is simply better than Georgia's defense – and likely too good for any team in the SEC to handle.

Georgia will very likely get another shot. Given how other preseason contenders in the SEC have either flopped (LSU), shown a potentially fatal flaw (Florida) or already been eliminated from the College Football Playoff picture (Auburn and Tennessee), the Bulldogs and Crimson Tide are the heavy favor-

ites to meet again in December in the SEC championship game.

And given the implosion in the Big 12, where Oklahoma already has two losses, and with the Big Ten and Pac-12 playing even more abbreviated schedules with no added weeks as buffers against cancellations, the SEC can again imagine a scenario in which two conference teams – the champion and the runner-up – reach the national semifinals.

If so, Saturday might only be the first of multiple matchups this season. Saturday might also tell us what's coming: Unless Georgia can find an answer for the Alabama offense, the next meeting should resemble the first.





Ezekiel Roulette has taken odd jobs such as washing cars and delivering groceries to make ends meet and support his daughter Kamari Brown in Columbus, Ohio. PHOTOS BY MADDIE MCGARVEY/THE HECHINGER REPORT

Families struggle to meet basic needs

Red tape can create obstacles to intended aid

Jackie Mader
The Hechinger Report

By early October, Kaneadsha Jones was close to giving up. It had been seven months since she or her husband had steady work. Seven months since her three school-age children, including a 14-year-old daughter with autism who is blind, nonverbal and immunocompromised, had been to school. Four months since a shooting on her block left her car and her family's rented house in north Columbus, Ohio, riddled with bullet holes and her 12-year-old daughter struggling with severe post-traumatic stress disorder.

The pressure of it all – the hunger, the constant worrying, the desperation to find some stability – was crushing. Some days, she struggled to get out of bed.

"I'm so tired," Jones said. "It seems nothing is getting a little better. The only thing that keeps me trying is my family."

Each day, she faced the same worries and tremendous stress as the day before: Would her landlord start eviction proceedings again soon? When would her car be repossessed? Was her internet bill past due, and if so, how would her children attend school online? If she put gas in the car to get to the grocery store, would she be able to buy food? In the rare weeks when there was a bit of money left over, should it go toward rent, water or electricity?

Jones, 43, a U.S. Army veteran and a certified medical assistant with an associate degree in applied science, is one of millions of parents who have seen



Kaneadsha Jones helps her daughter get her computer set up for distance learning. Jones' daughters have found it difficult to concentrate on classes.

"Those of us who truly need the help can't get it."

Kaneadsha Jones
Unemployed mother in Columbus, Ohio

their lives upended by the coronavirus pandemic.

For families living in or at the edge of poverty, the effects of the pandemic have been especially devastating. While child care centers and schools are closed and safety nets disintegrate under enormous demand, families that have been thrust into poverty see little hope of getting out. Meeting basic needs such as food and shelter has become a

daily challenge; many are one eviction notice away from homelessness. Parents go without food to feed their children, relying heavily on free lunches from schools and food banks, many of which have strained to meet demand.

Families hoped that more federal funds would provide some sort of lifeline, but relief legislation is still up in the air.

"It is ridiculous that these things are even being allowed to happen to people," Jones said. "People need to know this pandemic doesn't affect everyone the same."

Discharged honorably from the military after having an epileptic seizure, Jones spent years as a single mother to

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US didn't take notes on Italian lesson

Pandemic responses a study in contrasts

Eric J. Lyman
Special to USA TODAY

ROME – Italy and the United States are a study in contrasts when it comes to the way they confronted the pandemic.

Italy was the first country hit hard after the virus spread beyond China's borders, and after some early missteps, the country took decisive action. Italy's national lockdown was the first in Europe during peacetime, and it was stricter and lasted longer than those in other countries. Rules were closely enforced by police with the power to levy fines.

Leaders followed the same mask and social distancing guidelines as everyone else, as Italian factories started manufacturing ventilators, masks and other protective equipment. Whenever a cluster of cases emerged, the area was quickly quarantined and the sick cared for by a free public health system.



The audience for a health industry event Oct. 9 in Catania, Italy, is kept socially distanced by cordoned-off seats. FABRIZIO VILLA/GETTY IMAGES

Most importantly, Italians overwhelmingly followed the rules.

"In Italy, we might have a reputation as being a nation of disorganized rule breakers, but the truth is people tend to follow the advice of their doctors," said Giovanni Sebastiani, a researcher and member of Italy's National Research Council. "Our lockdown was long, we only reopened in measured stages, and almost everyone did what they were supposed to do."

Italy, a country of 60 million, was the first in the world to have 200,000 official coronavirus cases (on April 28) and the first to record 30,000 deaths (May 7). By late May the daily infection rate dropped from more than 5,000 to the low triple digits – and for the most part, it stayed there until last month.

As is the case in most countries in Europe, COVID-19 infections in Italy are rising again, and the country topped 10,000 new infections Friday, breaking its daily high for positive tests. The World Health Organization warned that the virus is rapidly

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Risk elevated as weather chases people indoors

Fauci warns against Thanksgiving gatherings

Adrianna Rodriguez
USA TODAY

Officials have been able to control COVID-19 transmission rates by implementing policies that encourage residents to eat and drink, exercise and spend time with friends and loved ones at a safe distance outside.

But health experts are concerned cases could spike again as cooler temperatures in the fall and winter force people back indoors.

The nation's leading infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, also is concerned upcoming holiday celebrations could increase transmission rates

and advised Americans to skip any big Thanksgiving plans.

Speaking to "CBS Evening News" Wednesday, Fauci cautioned against "gathering together in an indoor setting" with large groups of out-of-town guests. "It is unfortunate, because that's such a sacred part of American tradition – the family gathering around Thanksgiving," he said. "But that is a risk."

Some experts suspect indoor transmission is what facilitated the summer surge of COVID-19 cases in Southern states as residents retreated to public places with air conditioning to escape the heat. The three most populous states – California, Texas and Florida – each tallied more than 500,000 infections at the height of the surge in August, according to Johns Hopkins data.

"Indoors in public spaces is one of the



Dr. Anthony Fauci cautions against gathering for Thanksgiving. "It's unfortunate, because that's such a sacred part of American tradition ..." GRAEME JENNINGS/POOL/GETTY IMAGES FILE

places where the largest amounts of risk and transmission are likely to be happening," said William Hanage, associate professor of epidemiology and a faculty member in the Center for Communicable Disease Dynamic at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

'A minority of infections leads to the majority of transmission'

Dr. Lewis Nelson, professor and chair of emergency medicine at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, said one of the main reasons there's a higher risk of transmission indoors than outdoors is lack of ventilation.

Natural air currents outside disperse virus particles more quickly and effec-

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Staying safe

Continued from Page 1D

tively than inside. There’s minimal to no air circulation indoors, allowing virus particles to linger in the air or fall on high-touch surfaces.

“If I were to smoke a cigarette (inside), you would see the smoke particles linger,” he said. “Whereas outdoors the smoke kind of leaves.”

Additionally, indoor public places have more surfaces. As respiratory droplets or aerosol particles fall, they land on table tops, chairs, door handles and other objects people frequently touch.

There are fewer surfaces outdoors, Nelson said. “Nobody is touching the ground and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.”

People also tend to be closer indoors because they’re confined by walls. Hanage said bars are a major source of transmission in communities because people tend to gather there for long periods of time as judgment is impaired by the consumption of alcohol.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adults with confirmed COVID-19 are twice as likely to have dined out at a restaurant in the 14 days before becoming sick than those who tested negative.

“A minority of infections leads to the majority of transmission,” he said. “Obviously, if you’re at a bar then that cluster tends to be much larger as more people are gathering together.”

How to increase airflow and ventilation indoors

Experts agree increasing air flow in an indoor setting is important for reduc-

ing transmission risk as it prevents virus particles from hanging in the air for too long.

Ventilation rate is the volume of outside air provided per unit of time and air change rate is the ventilation rate of a space divided by the volume of that space, according to Shelly Miller professor of mechanical engineering at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Most air-conditioning and heating systems cycle about 20% of fresh air into a building while recirculating the remaining 80% or so for efficiency.

However, ventilation can be increased by opening a window and turning on a fan. Most portable air filters can’t filter out airborne virus particles, but they still facilitate air circulation that disperses the virus. Air cleaners with HEPA filtration remove more than 99% of airborne particles regardless of the particle size and also facilitate air circulation.

“If you can clear any airborne virus out quickly, you’ll reduce the transmission risk,” Miller said.

While UVC devices are helpful for commercial buildings like offices and schools, experts recommend sticking to a simple fan or portable air filter for residential use as some disinfecting gadgets can be harmful if used incorrectly.

Another good way to reduce the risk of transmission is to limit the number of people in a room, which contributes to better indoor air quality overall.

“If I drop the number of students from 35 to 17 now, the ventilation provides twice as much outside air per person and that’s awesome,” Miller said.

Building consultant company BranchPattern developed an online calculator that determines transmission risk by inputting space characteristics such as heating, ventilation, how many people are in the room and for how long.

The user also can add parameters such as mask-wearing and portable filters.

Getting back to the basics: Masks, social distancing, hand hygiene

Experts say the best way to stay safe indoors is through the three basic mitigation efforts: masks, social distancing and hand hygiene.

Masks are especially important. CDC Director Robert R. Redfield told a Senate panel in mid-September a vaccine may not be available to the American public until summer or fall 2021 and that masks are “the most important, powerful public health tool we have” – possibly even more effective than a vaccine.

Dr. Sunil Sood, infectious diseases specialist at Northwell Health’s South Shore University Hospital in Bay Shore, New York, said diners should wear masks even when they’re eating outside.

“It is tiresome ... (but) you just have to do that,” he said. “The only time you should take your mask off is when you’re actually biting and chewing.”

This means keeping the mask on while chatting with other diners, waiting for food and speaking with your waiter.

Dr. Chad Asplund, professor of family medicine and orthopedics at the Mayo Clinic, said these policies also apply to the gym.

He recommends wearing a mask at all times, wiping down machines and washing your hands. He also advises against using some gym equipment, such as yoga mats and blocks.

“If you were doing intervals, it becomes harder to wear a mask,” Asplund said. “You may want to get creative with times you normally go because there are definitely times (where it gets crowded) before work and after work.”

For social distancing, Colorado’s state health department developed an online tool that calculates transmission risk using the total square footage of the space and objects in the room to determine how many people can safely be there at one time.

Keep an eye on community transmission rates

Although mask-wearing, social distancing, hand hygiene and increased air flow can reduce the risk of transmission indoors, these mitigation efforts aren’t 100% effective, especially if community transmission rates are high.

Barry Bloom, research professor of public health and former dean of Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, recommends residents keep an eye on transmission rates in their area to determine if it’s safe to go to an indoor public setting.

“When (rates are) high, as in many parts of the states, it’s just asking for trouble,” he said.

Bloom says this is happening in Britain, where the nation’s number of confirmed COVID-19 cases has more than tripled in the last three weeks, with infection rates rising across all age groups and regions.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson unveiled a new system Monday that set out progressively stricter measures to slow the spread of the virus, three weeks after a nationwide program that banned gatherings of more than six people and required pubs and restaurants to close early.

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Basic needs

Continued from Page 1D

her four children. She tried her hand at several careers, working as a certified medical assistant at a crisis counseling and rehabilitation center, a home health aide and a patient care advocate, among other jobs. She worked while going to school to earn her medical assistant certification in 2017, ensuring her children had stable housing.

She and her daughters, Kamari, 14, Ma’Kaylah, 12, and Trinity, 8, have lived in the same rented house for more than five years. “Even when I was working, it was hard,” Jones said as she took a break from washing and detailing cars. “This pandemic has made everything that much harder.”

‘We needed some food’

Last winter, Jones had a steady job at a call center. In March, when the pandemic hit and schools closed, she quit. She said her bosses wouldn’t allow employees to wear masks or gloves in the packed office, and they wouldn’t let her work from home. She couldn’t risk exposing her immunocompromised daughter, Kamari, to the coronavirus, and she didn’t feel comfortable leaving her children at home all day, where the two youngest would be responsible for caring for their older sister. (Her oldest daughter, Brooklynn, 22, lives in her own apartment.)

Jones hoped the beefed-up unemployment benefits in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act in the spring would help the family get by. Instead, she hit a tangle of red tape: Her unemployment application was denied because she was still listed as employed in the call center’s records. When she finally proved she wasn’t, the payments were put toward a debt she owed for overpayment of previous unemployment benefits. She applied for food stamps but made too much money to qualify based on the unemployment she was supposed to be receiving but wasn’t.

Bills piled up. Jones and her husband, Ezekiel Roulette, who met several years ago while they worked at a rehabilitation center, did any jobs they could find, including cutting grass, home demolition and running a car washing and detailing service from home. As the pandemic spread and businesses shut down, the work dried up.

The family fell behind on rent. Their landlord started eviction proceedings in midsummer, then Jones received one-time rent assistance from IMPACT Community Action, a nonprofit group in Columbus, Ohio. The group received so many requests for help, it had to shut down its program for rental or mortgage assistance in early October and was still trying to process 3,000 applications for help in its queue.

The family’s only stable income was



Ma’Kaylah Brown does her homework. Brown’s mother, Kaneadsha Jones, worries about how the pandemic affects Ma’Kaylah. MADDIE MCGARVEY/THE HECHINGER REPORT

\$760 a month in Social Security Disability Insurance for Kamari and child support, which totals \$169 a month. Rent alone, if they paid it in full, was \$725. That left about \$200 for food, car payments, gas for the family’s car and utilities. Knowing the city was halting utility disconnections for nonpayment during the spring, Jones prioritized food, gas and internet. When the family’s federal relief check for \$2,700 arrived in May, she spent nearly all of it catching up on utility payments.

In August, Jones overdrew her bank account to pay for internet, so her children could start virtual classes. Jones took more money she didn’t have out of her checking account for a few groceries: milk, bread, eggs and ramen noodles. “I’ll pay it back. I didn’t have a choice,” she said. “We needed some food. ... We’re going to do whatever we have to do.”

Nationwide, food insecurity has become a pervasive problem. The percentage of families with children who reported not having enough to eat more than tripled in July compared with 2019.

‘We can’t keep this up’

In late summer, Jones went to a veterans assistance office, but she said she was told she didn’t meet the criteria for aid, which included proof that she could pay some of her expenses.

“I am a U.S. Army vet, military police officer, and I’m a certified medical assistant with an associate degree in applied science,” Jones said. “I am just so in awe that I can’t find any help.”

Desperate for income, Jones and her husband started delivering groceries, making \$8.75 a delivery. They took a job washing and detailing cars for a dealership, where they were paid \$40 per car minus supplies they had to purchase themselves, such as car wax and polish.

Her children stayed at home during the day, along with several cousins. Jones put two of the oldest, who were 12 and 13, in charge. She checked the law to make sure it was legal to leave them

home alone and gave them strict instructions: Don’t open the door. Don’t even ask “Who’s there?” Don’t look out the window. Don’t go outside.

“We can’t keep this up,” she said. In between washing cars, she called to check on the children. “It’s just not going to work.”

In September, online school began. She couldn’t get the Chromebooks the schools sent home to turn on. She drove across town to two separate schools to exchange them, twice. After several weeks and many conversations with tech support, Kamari’s Chromebook turned on but wouldn’t let her log in.

Jones picked up a small bag of school supplies from Kamari’s school and tried to do hands-on activities with her. She helped her feel a book and turn the pages, but lessons were often short-lived, she said.

Requiring her children to concentrate for hours of online school seemed impossible. Ma’Kaylah sometimes fell asleep.

After an uptick in violent crime on her block, Jones no longer let her kids out to play. When they could afford the gas, Jones and her husband drove the children out of the neighborhood once a week to a park where they could play and run around safely. A couple of times, they drove an hour northwest to a lake where they could fish and the kids could play at the playground. “It’s just calming,” Jones said.

“No matter how hard we try to make things as normal as possible and shield the kids from the stress and anxiety my husband and I are facing,” she said, “it’s not working.”

‘I’m tired of fighting’

On a Thursday in late September, the family headed out to pick up food from the girls’ schools, their main source of nutrition. Jones’ mind was racing with her newest concern: A family member had visited and brought in bedbugs. The family needed to throw out their furniture and find a way to replace it. One of

her daughters had the option of going to school in person two days a week, but Jones was concerned she might catch the virus and bring it home.

Jones and her husband gave up on washing cars, which paid so little it didn’t cover the cost of supplies. She estimated she had applied to at least 20 positions in fast food, retail, call centers, grocery stores and gas stations. Despite her education and experience, she was willing to accept almost anything, as long as it felt safe. “I just want to be able to work in an environment that will not expose me to COVID-19,” she said.

In early October, Jones and her husband picked up extra grocery delivery jobs to make ends meet, but it still wasn’t enough. During the first week of the month, she and her husband didn’t eat for three days, so they could ration what food they had for the girls.

Jones received a letter from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services in response to her appeal for unemployment. It said she wasn’t eligible for unemployment benefits because she had failed to prove she had been unemployed because of “disruptions caused by COVID-19.”

“I don’t know what else I can tell them,” she said.

The same week, Jones’ landlord served the family with a new eviction notice. Jones knew the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had halted evictions in early September as a way to prevent the spread of the coronavirus but had been unaware of a form she needed to fill out and submit to her landlord. When she learned about it, she hurried to a library to print it out, hoping it would buy the family some time.

In mid-October, Roulette was hired for a seasonal job working at a distribution center for a large, Columbus-based fashion retailer. He would make \$18.50 an hour, a welcome bright spot: A few days earlier, the family’s electricity was shut off. Jones had put all her extra money toward the gas bill instead.

Jones felt relieved, but she was desperate to find a job of her own. “I’m tired of fighting. I’m just trying to live and do what I can do,” Jones said. “It’s such a bureaucracy to get help. Those of us who truly need the help can’t get it.”

This story about poverty was produced by The Hechinger Report, a non-profit, independent news organization focused on inequality and innovation in education.

Corrections & Clarifications

A story Oct. 13 on Page 1D about previously unreported Illinois coronavirus outbreaks should have specified that the positive cases tied to Cook County Jail were cumulative as of Sept. 30 and as opposed to a one-time active outbreak.

Medicare to cut payouts to labs with slow test results

Officials say that won't fix underlying challenges

Ken Alltucker
USA TODAY

Labs that take longer than two days to complete coronavirus tests will see federal payments cut \$25 per test under a new policy to begin Jan. 1.

The agency overseeing Medicare will pay labs \$100 per coronavirus test completed on a high-volume machine within two days of collecting a specimen. Labs that take longer will get only \$75 per test next year, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Large labs routinely took one week or longer to process coronavirus tests this summer when cases spiked and Americans flocked to doctors' offices, pop-up sites and chain pharmacies to get tested. Such a delay in reporting results rendered tests useless for tracing the contacts of infected individuals.

Dr. Nirav Shah, a senior scholar at Stanford University's Clinical Excellence Research Center, said the payment change may compel labs to improve turnaround times.

"The incentives are now aligned to improve turnaround time, not simply maximize volume of tests," said Shah, a former Commissioner of the New York State Department of Health. "For public health, any test that's delayed more than one (or) two days is useless for contact tracing."

But industry officials say payment cuts won't fix underlying challenges labs face.

The American Clinical Laboratory Association, an industry organization representing private commercial labs, said labs have taken steps to increase capacity and improve turnaround times.

"We're concerned this policy could create a domino effect where patient access to testing is severely reduced," ACLA President Julie Khani said in a statement. "Cutting laboratory reimbursement won't address the root causes of delayed turnaround times."

Labs still can't get the chemicals they need to run the tests or the plastic materials such as pipettes or tubes to transport specimens, said Dr. Patrick Godbey, president of the College of American Pathologists.

Godbey, a lab director at Southeast Georgia Regional Medical Center in Brunswick, Georgia, said shortages of chemical reagents and plastic equipment means his hospital must send some samples to third-party labs.

"If we can't get the reagents, we can't get the consumables – and we still can't – then it's really not good to penalize labs for doing the best job they can," Godbey said. "The pathologists, the labs themselves, don't control the supply



President Donald Trump with Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Seema Verma, who said faster testing will allow patients “to act quickly” after learning the results. MANDEL NGAN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES FILE

chain. We're going to be penalized for that."

Testing demand has fluctuated throughout the pandemic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention initially delivered flawed tests to state and local public health labs, and federal regulators were slow to authorize commercial labs to fill the nation's testing void.

In mid-April, Medicare offered a sweetener for labs to increase testing output, offering \$100 for each "high-throughput" test. The payment increase was meant as an incentive to get labs to employ machines that can quickly process a high volume of tests.

Labs could collect the \$100 per test run on high-throughput machines no matter how long it took to complete tests and reports results to doctors and consumers.

Under the new policy, Medicare will pay \$75 for each test on a high-throughput machine. Labs that complete tests within two days will get a \$25 per-test bonus. However, only labs with two-day turnarounds for a majority of coronavirus tests performed over the previous 30 days are eligible for the bonus.

CMS Administrator Seema Verma said in a statement the new policy supports quick testing, "which will allow patients and physicians to act quickly and decisively with respect to treatment decisions, physical isolation, and con-

tact tracing."

As states relaxed social distancing requirements and allowed more people outside, cases and testing demand again spiked in July. Major commercial labs took one week or longer to process tests, prompting some to prioritize hospital and nursing home patients and health care workers.

With more than 373,000 new U.S. cases in the past week – a rate not seen since July – demand for testing is once again surging. Labs completed an average of more than one million daily tests this past week, according to data from the COVID Tracking Project.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, warned this week of a resurgence of cases in Northwest, Midwest and other northern states as the weather cools.

Rapid antigen tests that don't require a lab and can produce results in 15 minutes might provide another option for consumers and doctors. The rapid tests are less sensitive than lab-based molecular PCR tests, which remain the gold standard in testing to detect the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services purchased and sent rapid antigen testing instruments to nearly 14,000 nursing homes nationwide as part of a strategy to protect vulnerable seniors.

Nursing homes to get free vaccines

CVS, Walgreens partner as providers in program

Nathan Bomey
and Courtney Subramanian
USA TODAY

Americans living or working in long-term care facilities, including nursing homes and assisted care living centers, will receive COVID-19 vaccinations for free if and when they become available, the Trump administration said Friday.

The administration announced a partnership with the nation's two largest drug store chains, CVS and Walgreens, "to provide and administer" the vaccines with "no out-of-pocket costs" for the recipients. The drug store chains released separate statements confirming their participation in the program.

Dozens of COVID-19 vaccines candidates are in the works, including several that could be within months of receiving emergency authorization from the likes of drug companies Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

Calling the deal the "Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program," the Trump administration said residents of long-term care facilities "may be part of the prioritized groups for initial COVID-19 vaccination efforts until there are enough doses available for every American who wishes to be vaccinated."

"Protecting the vulnerable has been the number one priority of the Trump Administration's response to COVID-19, and that commitment will continue through distributing a safe and effective vaccine earliest to those who need it most," Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said in a statement.

Vaccine experts have said that older Americans are likely to be among the first to receive vaccinations since they are the most vulnerable to the disease.

While coordinating COVID-19 immunizations at the state level is a complex and ongoing process, "this public-private partnership to vaccinate nursing home and long-term facility residents and workers is a giant step forward," said Claire Hannan, executive director of the Association of Immunization Managers.

"Protecting the vulnerable has been the number one priority of the Trump Administration's response to COVID-19 ..."

Alex Azar
Health and Human Services Secretary

People in nursing homes and other long-term care settings account for less than 1% of the U.S. population, but they represent about 40% of the deaths from COVID-19, with more than 83,600 fatalities logged by the COVID Tracking Project.

The government said it would tap "multiple authorities to ensure appropriate reimbursement for these services" and said, "no American being vaccinated for COVID-19 will have to pay out-of-pocket."

CVS and Walgreens are expected to coordinate three clinics apiece directly with each long-term care facility over the course of about two months to ensure the administration of two doses of the vaccine, if necessary.

The administration said long-term care facilities are not required to participate in the program. HHS is fielding an online survey for nursing homes to assess their interest in the vaccine distribution program, but the allocation of vaccines will be done through state and territorial governments.

President Donald Trump announced the partnership Friday at an event billed as "Protecting America's Seniors" in Fort Myers, Florida. The president is trying to shore up support among senior citizens, a key voting bloc that helped him win four years ago but which recent polling suggests has eroded in recent months.

The president, 74, vowed a vaccine would be available before the end of the year despite his own federal health experts saying that timeline is highly unlikely, and vowed that senior citizens would be "first in line."

Contributing: Associated Press

Italy

Continued from Page 1D

spinning out of control in Europe and the region has reached a tipping point to contain a coronavirus second wave.

Daily infection rates have spiked to more than 14,000 in Spain, nearly 20,000 in the U.K. and nearly 30,000 in France – all far above their peaks from the spring. The USA has averaged 50,000-60,000 cases per day since the start of October, according to the COVID Tracking Project. The USA has had roughly 8 million cases and more than 219,000 deaths.

This month, German Chancellor Angela Merkel – Germany is the major European country with the most success in limiting the spread of the virus – warned her compatriots against taking vacations in high-risk parts of Europe. She said there was no problem for them to travel to Italy, where she said the government "has acted with great prudence."

'Watch in disbelief'

Italians shook their heads at news reports from the USA. The politicization of mask wearing, the uneven application and enforcement of coronavirus rules from state to state, disregard for health guidelines at beaches, parks and political rallies and the way President Donald Trump handled his own case of COVID-19 by downplaying the severity of the disease were all difficult for many

Italians to comprehend.

"Italians have always looked up to the United States, but what is happening now makes us watch in disbelief," said Flavio Chiapponi, a political scientist with the University of Pavia in northern Italy. "In the earliest days of the pandemic, we learned our lessons by trial and error, which is why it hit us so hard."

"We hoped other countries would learn from what we went through, but that didn't happen in many countries, including the United States," Chiapponi said.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte vowed the country would not face another national lockdown.

"We are much more prepared now than we were in March and April," said Giorgio Palu, a professor emeritus in microbiology at the University of Padova and a past president of the European Virology Society. "Hospitals are prepared, and testing is far more widespread. We understand what we are dealing with."

This week, the government introduced restrictions for at-home social events, restaurants, school activities and even weddings. This month, a decree passed requiring mask use even outside and far from others. The coronavirus state of emergency put into place Jan. 31 has been extended until its one-year anniversary, giving authorities power to quickly lock down neighborhoods or towns when warranted.

'We have to keep it up'

The majority of Italians are OK with

mask wearing, according to a survey released during the summer by Imperial College London. About 85% of Italians said they were "very" or "quite" willing to don a mask if advised to do so, the highest rate among the European countries surveyed.

As the infection rate climbed in September, coffee bars and city squares were abuzz with the news. Cautiously optimistic residents said they didn't lose their faith in the government.

"I feel like the country's leadership has sent a clear, united, consistent message about the coronavirus, unlike the situation back home," said Molly Gage, a mother of two who originally hails from Pittsburgh but has been based in Rome for 13 years. "In Italy, the pandemic is treated like a public health issue, which is what it is. It's difficult for everyone, but one thing that makes it a little easier is knowing that everything that can be done here is being done."

Alessandra Bernero, an office worker who was sick with COVID-19 for four weeks in March and April, had a similar view.

"When I wake up, the first thing I do is look on my phone for the latest information about infections and deaths and hospitalizations," she said. "I was more relaxed a couple of months ago than I am now, but I know we are paying attention and taking the problem seriously. We have to keep it up until the virus goes away or there's a vaccine."

TRAVEL

Rookies’ rock climbing sites in reach

Larry Bleiberg
Special to USA TODAY

Rock climbing, one of the country’s fastest growing sports, not only builds physical strength and mental focus, but also can lead you to some beautiful places, says Chris Santella, author of “Fifty Places To Rock Climb Before You Die” (Abrams Image, \$24.99). With the increasing popularity of climbing gyms and the addition of climbing to the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, interest is booming. He shares some favorite U.S. climbing spots that welcome newer climbers with Larry Bleiberg for USA TODAY:

Horse Pens 40, Steele, Alabama

These natural rock shelters in the Appalachian foothills are renowned for bouldering, a type of climbing without ropes and harnesses. “It’s one of the top bouldering spots in the United States, a very unique little ecosystem there,” Santella says. Located about an hour north of Birmingham, it’s particularly popular in the fall when it hosts the final event in the Triple Crown of Bouldering.

● **More information:**
horsepens40.tripod.com

Bishop, California

This area on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada mountains offers an array of climbing options: bouldering; sport climbing, which uses anchors permanently fixed in the rock; and traditional (trad) climbing, which has climbers using removable protection gear. “You have a good mix and stunning scenery with crazy oversized granite boulders and the snow-capped Sierra in the background,” Santella says.

● **More information:**
bishopvisitor.com

Earth Treks, Englewood, Colorado

While you can find climbing gyms across the country, this one just south of Denver is worth a special trip, says Santella. With 53,000 square feet, the massive facility has a dedicated bouldering area, a cadre of climbing instructors and even extras like child care and yoga. “This is special.”

● **More information:**
earthtreksclimbing.com/englewood

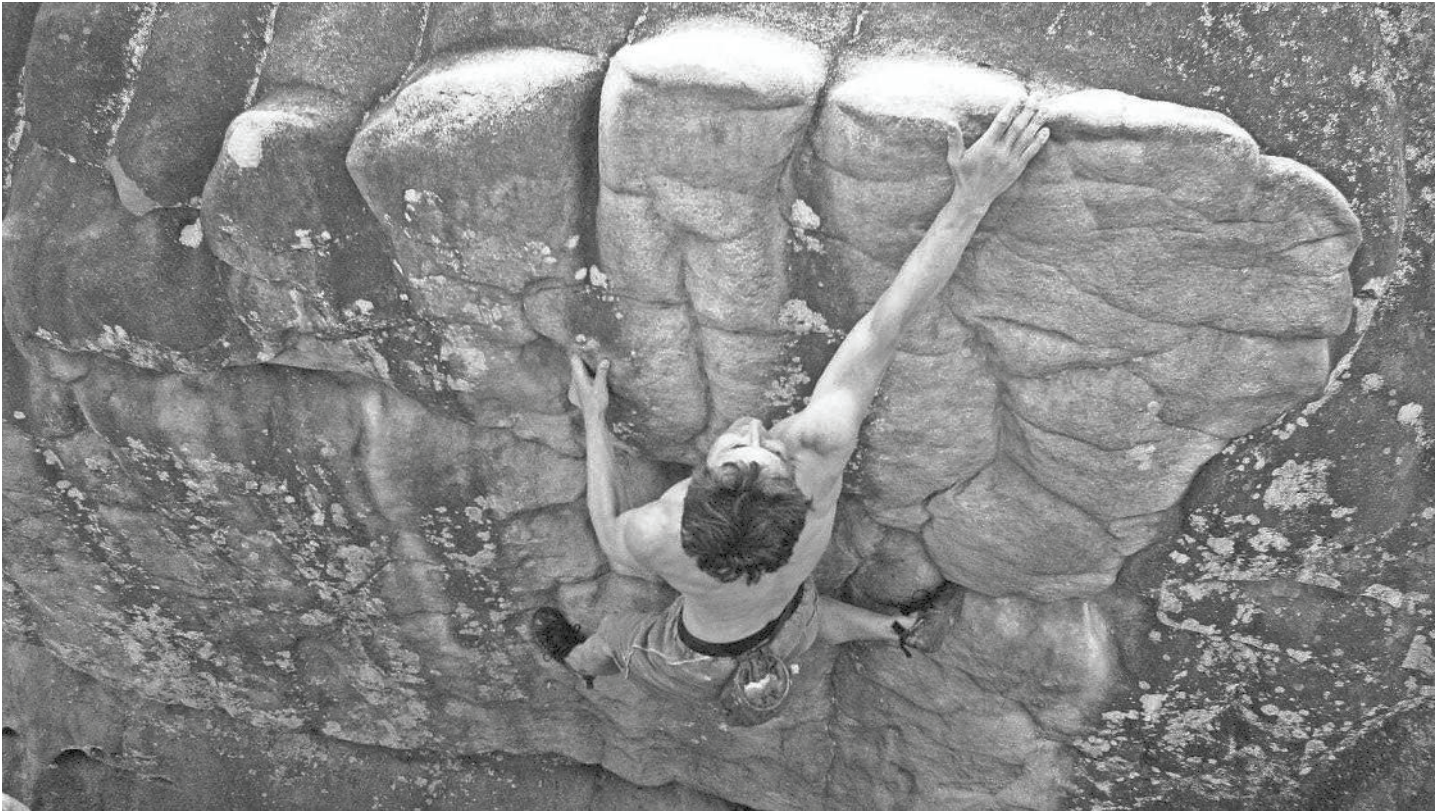
City of Rocks, Idaho

This national reserve near the Utah border is worth a trip for the scenery alone. Named by gold miners heading to California in 1849, its granite spires look like skyscrapers, towering 600 feet above the ground. “It’s a fascinating area from a geologic and geographic perspective. There are so many rocks to climb,” Santella says. Many visitors come for August’s Idaho Mountain Festival, a celebration of climbing with top athletes and gear manufacturers.

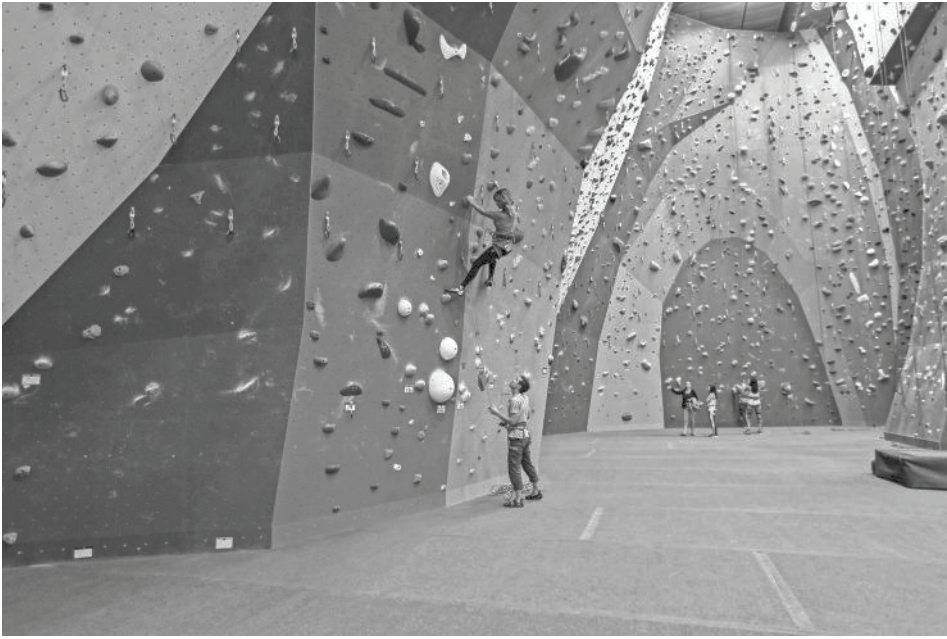
● **More information:** nps.gov/ciro

Red River Gorge, Kentucky

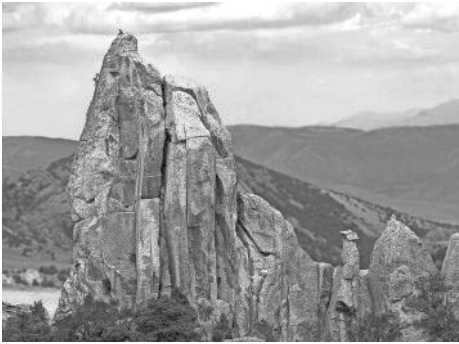
This designated geological area in Daniel Boone National Forest is prized



Horse Pens 40 in Steele, Ala., is one of the top spots in the country for bouldering, a style of climbing done without ropes or harnesses. JIM THORNBERG



Earth Treks in Englewood, Colo., is a massive climbing gym. EARTH TREKS



The granite spires found in Idaho’s City of Rocks National Reserve resemble skyscrapers, towering 600 feet above the ground. JIM THORNBERG

North Conway, New Hampshire

Santella calls this town the Jackson Hole of the White Mountains, offering visitors a wide range of outdoor opportunities. One favorite traditional climb is Upper Refuse, which takes enthusiasts hundreds of feet off the ground over several pitches (roped sections). “For some, it may be the most amazing experience of their life; for others, it’s terrifying.”

● **More information:**
northconwaynh.com

Smith Rock State Park, Oregon

Located about 25 miles north of Bend, this spot became popular in the 1980s and is considered the birthplace of American sport climbing, Santella says. The world’s top climbers come on pilgrimages to try dizzyingly difficult routes, but the park also offers much easier options. As an outdoor hub, Bend also has a large climbing community with instructors and guides.

● **More information:**
oregonstateparks.org

for its climbing routes and rock scenery. The park, located an hour southeast of Lexington, is well-known in the climbing world for both beginner-friendly terrain and more challenging sections. “It’s a place where you can find a lot of fellow climbers,” Santella says.

● **More information:** fs.usda.gov/recarea/dbnf/recarea/?recid=39458

Acadia National Park, Maine

This popular New England park is one of the few places where you can scale seaside cliffs, Santella says. “The granite is good for climbing. In some areas, you need to start at low tide.” The area also has guides, instructors and climbing schools, making it particularly welcoming for beginners.

● **More information:** nps.gov/acad

Devil’s Lake State Park, Wisconsin

If you think the Midwest’s flat and

featureless, you need to visit this spot in the Baraboo Range, an hour northwest of Madison. The area has been attracting climbers since the 1940s, and although known for its challenging terrain, it also has easier spots for newbies, Santella says. Many routes have water views, while climbing is on ancient Precambrian rock exposed during the last glaciation.

● **More information:** dnr.wi.gov

Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming

It’s possible to climb Grand Teton, the towering peak which gives its name to the park. A guided multiday trip up the 13,770-foot mountain requires several climbing disciplines, but offers an incredible reward: a view of 14 different mountain ranges in four states, Santella says. “Pictures, as beautiful as they are, don’t do it justice.”

● **More information:** nps.gov/grte

Study: Air on planes cleaner than in most homes

Airborne spread on 767s, 777s was reduced 99.7%

Chris Woodyard
USA TODAY

A new study conducted for the Department of Defense adds credence to the growing belief that airline passengers face minimal risk of contracting coronavirus when flying. The study found the risk of aerosol dispersion – transmission of the virus through the air – was reduced 99.7% thanks to high air exchange rates, HEPA-filtered recirculation and downward ventilation found on modern jets. Investigators looked at the impact of an infected passenger on others seated in the same row and those nearby in the cabins of Boeing 767s and 777s. Those two aircraft types are widebodies typically used for long-haul flights where a virus would be expected to spread more easily. To test the exposure risk for passengers sitting near an infected person, researchers released fluorescent tracer

aerosols representing the droplets released by exhaling or coughing and looked at the impact on multiple “breathing zones” throughout the aircraft. In total, more than 11,500 breathing zone seat measurements were taken with releases from 46 different seats. Asked about the report Thursday during a call with analysts and media, United CEO Scott Kirby said the results apply to other commercial jets as well. “The reality is those tests are indicative of what happens on every airplane. An aircraft is just a remarkably safe environment.” The study was conducted by a team that included members from United Airlines, Boeing, the University of Nebraska Medical Center, National Strategic Research Institute and research firms. It was prepared for two military agencies that move people and cargo, the U.S. Transportation Command and the Air Force’s Air Mobility Command. The study is in keeping with the message that airlines have been trying to convey that HEPA filters and high turnover rates of airflow in passenger cabins reduce passenger exposure. In fact, the

study found that contamination in the aircraft examined was less than what is found in private residences. Kirby said with the airflow from ceiling to floor, “there is no place indoors that it is anywhere close to that” when it comes to limiting the spread. He urged other airlines to emulate United’s policy of making sure power units operate in a way that allows passengers to take advantage of aircraft ventilation systems while still at the gate.

“An aircraft is just a remarkably safe environment.”

Scott Kirby
United CEO

He urged passengers to make sure that their overhead vents are fully open during their flights to maximize air circulation. On most planes, the air exchange rate is approximately every three minutes and 75% comes from outside the plane, meaning that only 25% of cabin air is re-

circulated. “The 767 and 777 both removed particulate 15 times faster than a home ... and five to six times faster than recommended design specifications for modern hospital operating or patient isolation rooms,” the study continued. Tests were conducted by placing instruments that can measure particles in proximity to a simulated sick passenger. The study took masks into consideration, with a focus on the expectation passengers would be wearing surgical masks, the type most likely to be handed out by airlines in cases where passengers did not bring their own. Studies are divided. Two studies published earlier this fall raised the prospect that the virus can spread between passengers, examining flights in which clusters of infections were reported. It’s worth noting those studies involved flights that took place early in the pandemic. It was also unclear whether airlines had imposed some of the safety measures that later became adopted industrywide, such as mask requirements.

50★States

News from across the USA

ALASKA Bethel: Health officials in a region with a growing COVID-19 outbreak asked residents to stop gathering with nonhousehold members to slow the spread of the virus. Officials said 126 people tested positive for the virus in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta over the past two weeks, KYUK-AM reported.

ARIZONA Peoria: The city is using some of its federal coronavirus relief funding to give residents access to equipment to work and learn from home. The Valley suburb, just northwest of Phoenix, used some of its \$20.2 million in CARES Act funding allocated by the Governor’s Office to purchase 50 Chromebook laptops and wireless internet hotspots.

ARKANSAS Little Rock: Cities, towns and counties in Arkansas can now apply for federal coronavirus relief funding, the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration announced Saturday.

CALIFORNIA Sacramento: The nation’s most populous state has regained more than a third of the 2.6 million nonfarm jobs it lost to the coronavirus pandemic in March and April, state officials said.

COLORADO Denver: Colorado released its distribution plan for an approved coronavirus vaccine when it becomes publicly available as the state faced a deadline to submit it to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

CONNECTICUT Norwich: A contract was reached with the union representing nurses at Backus Hospital following a multiday strike. Sherri Dayton, an emergency department nurse and president of the Backus Federation of Nurses, AFT Local 5149, said early Saturday that she considered the four-year agreement a “win” and the union “felt validated.”

DELAWARE Dover: The Dover Public Library will reopen its doors to the public on Nov. 3 after months of closure amid the coronavirus pandemic.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA Washington: The city’s average number of coronavirus cases continues to trend upward, WUSA-TV reported.

FLORIDA West Palm Beach: The Palm Beach County school district is revamping the way it notifies parents and the general public about COVID-19 cases after several missteps that, in a vacuum of information, angered parents and teachers who felt in the dark about potential exposure to the illness.

GEORGIA Valdosta: Administrators at Valdosta State University pulled the plug on homecoming events scheduled for last weekend as a precaution against coronavirus infections. Regardless, students forged ahead with scheduled “spirit week” activities such as a sidewalk chalk art contest, a T-shirt swap day and an outdoor lunch with food trucks, WALB-TV reported.

HAWAII Honolulu: About 8,000 people landed in Hawaii on the first day of a pretravel testing program that allowed travelers to come to the islands without quarantining for two weeks if they could produce a negative coronavirus test.

IDAHO Nampa: A school district has canceled school Monday because of a teacher shortage after hundreds called out in sick in protest of in-person instruction during the coronavirus pandemic.

ILLINOIS Evanston: Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management said it has suspended in-person classes for two weeks after four students who attended recent off-campus gatherings tested positive for the coronavirus.

INDIANA Indianapolis: Indiana’s Rental Assistance Portal is accepting applications for a program that provides eligible renters with up to six months in rental assistance to help cover past due and ongoing monthly payments.

IOWA Des Moines: Gov. Kim Reynolds said she told a leading member of the White House coronavirus task force that she disputed the panel’s recent warning that Iowa has suffered “many preventable deaths” from COVID-19.

KANSAS Wichita: A retired firefighter upset with the city’s mask ordinance was arrested Friday on suspicion of threatening to kidnap and kill Wichita’s mayor, authorities said.

HIGHLIGHT: ALABAMA



The new Harriet Tubman statue is on display at the Equal Justice Initiative’s Legacy Pavilion in Montgomery, Ala. The museum is reopening for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic started. MICKEY WELSH/USA TODAY NETWORK

Montgomery: A museum that’s linked to the national lynching memorial in Montgomery is reopening for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic began. The Legacy Museum, which tells the story of slavery and its legacy in the United States, will offer free admission for a limited time, but crowd sizes are being restricted and face masks are required to help prevent the coronavirus from spreading. The museum and Legacy Pavilion are open Wednesday through Sunday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. The lynching memorial, the museum and the Legacy Pavilion are operated by the nonprofit Equal Justice Initiative, which announced the reopening in a statement. A new museum exhibit explores the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which often is referred to as the start of the modern civil rights movement in 1955. A new exhibit at Legacy Pavilion, located beside the memorial, will focus on slavery in the North, which hasn’t received as much attention as Southern slavery.

KENTUCKY Frankfort: Kentucky is expecting to receive its first federal shipment of a COVID-19 vaccine in late 2020 or early 2021, but it will likely take a year or more to get that vaccine to the Bluegrass State’s 4.4 million residents, the commissioner of the state’s Department for Public Health said Friday.

LOUISIANA Shreveport: The Emerging Viral Threat Lab at LSU Health Shreveport has now sequenced a total of 651 Louisiana SARS-CoV-2 virus genomes, making it the largest contributor to date of genetic data on SARS-CoV-2 in the state.

MAINE Portland: Maine’s investigation into a coronavirus outbreak that stemmed from a wedding and reception in the northern part of the state is still not fully closed. The outbreak is linked to at least seven deaths and more than 175 cases of the virus.

MARYLAND Salisbury: The city on Friday announced multiple new cases of COVID-19 among its departments. The city said all employees testing positive were given temporary leave, and they are now quarantining.

MASSACHUSETTS Boston: The Boston Symphony Orchestra on Friday extended its live performance hiatus and canceled the popular Holiday Pops concerts and the remainder of its winter/spring season through April.

MICHIGAN Hillsdale: Hillsdale Community Schools Superintendent Shawn Vondra said Davis Middle School is transitioning to distance learning until Oct. 28 in response to positive test results from several individuals who are “school related.”

MINNESOTA Minneapolis: Surging coronavirus cases in Minnesota schools have reduced the number of counties where the virus is spreading at low enough rates to allow for full, in-person instruction.

MISSISSIPPI Jackson: State health officer Dr. Thomas Dobbs said he overestimated the number of people who would continue to wear face coverings to prevent the spread of coronavirus after the statewide mask mandate was lifted.

MISSOURI St. Louis: A nightclub is fighting a closure order for alleged violations of mask and social distancing rules amid the coronavirus pandemic.

MONTANA Helena: An outdoor concert Oct. 3 attended by Republican U.S. Rep. Greg Gianforte, who is running for governor, has been linked to several COVID-19 cases, local health officials said.

NEBRASKA Lincoln: Gov. Pete Ricketts announced new restrictions aimed at curbing the coronavirus amid a surge of new cases and hospitalizations.

NEVADA Reno: Washoe County officials reported 164 new cases of COVID-19 on Saturday, the fourth-highest single-day figure since tracking began earlier in the year.

NEW HAMPSHIRE Concord: At least 17 people have tested positive for the coronavirus in an outbreak linked to a restaurant in Hudson, and more patrons might have been exposed, the Department of Health and Human Services said.

NEW JERSEY Trenton: Gov. Phil Murphy dismissed New Jersey’s top military commander Friday after a coronavirus outbreak hit the state’s three veterans homes resulting in 146 deaths. Col. Lisa Hou takes over immediately from Major Gen. Jemal Beale, Murphy said in a statement.

NEW MEXICO Albuquerque: Eight football players at the University of New Mexico and one assistant coach tested positive for the coronavirus, leading state officials to step in and shut down all team activities, the Albuquerque Journal reported.

NEW YORK New York City: A federal judge has refused to block Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s order limiting worship to as few as 10 congregants in communities seeing spikes in coronavirus infections.

NORTH CAROLINA Charlotte: Public health officials said at least nine cases of COVID-19 could be connected to a Charlotte church’s convocation events last weekend. Mecklenburg County said its health department urges anyone who attended the events at the United House of Prayer for All People just outside of downtown to get tested for the coronavirus, the Charlotte Observer reported.

NORTH DAKOTA Fargo: The bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Fargo has tested positive for the coronavirus. KFGO radio reported Bishop John Folda had been showing symptoms associated with the coronavirus since early last week and had himself tested while self-quarantining at his home in Fargo. The diocese said Folda is recovering and is following all recommendations from medical professionals.

OHIO Akron: State liquor agents have handed out more than 200 citations to bars for breaking COVID-19 orders. That number pales in comparison to the almost 20,000 visits that agents have made to bars and restaurants, most leading to no action.

OKLAHOMA Oklahoma City: The number of hospitalizations because of the coronavirus dipped Sunday but still remained high as the number of reported cases increased by 796 and deaths rose by three, according to the State Department of Health.

OREGON Salem: The 15th COVID-19 death among Oregon prisoners was reported Saturday by the Department of Corrections. In a release, the department said the prisoner, who was not identified, was being held at Snake River Correctional Institution in Malheur County.

PENNSYLVANIA Harrisburg: Gov. Tom Wolf vetoed a Republican-sponsored bill Friday that would have let restaurants and bars reopen at up to full capacity, saying it would have jeopardized public health and safety. It was the latest in a string of coronavirus-related vetoes from the Democratic governor, as GOP state lawmakers have continually pressed for looser social distancing restrictions and to revoke or modify other Wolf policies.

RHODE ISLAND Providence: It might not be a hit with motorists looking for parking spots, but restaurateurs and shop owners have embraced moving outdoor dining into the street during the coronavirus pandemic.

SOUTH CAROLINA Columbia: The State Fair is coming to Columbia, but like so much during the COVID-19 pandemic, it will be drive-thru. There won’t be an admission fee. Winning animals, art, flowers and photography will be displayed along one route for vehicles from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday. People will be able to buy fair food Tuesday through Saturday in a different part of the fairgrounds.

SOUTH DAKOTA Sioux Falls: More than 100 inmates at a South Dakota prison have tested positive for the coronavirus last week, the Department of Corrections said as the state experiences some of the worst transmission rates in the country.

TENNESSEE Nashville: The White House quietly told Tennessee early last week that “a statewide mask mandate must be implemented” to curb its growing spread of COVID-19, strong instructions that the White House and Gov. Bill Lee did not discuss publicly before the report emerged in a records request.

TEXAS Amarillo: Gov. Greg Abbott said he is deploying medical personnel and supplies to the Panhandle and surrounding region as the coronavirus surges again, marking the second time in two weeks the state has sent response teams because of rising caseloads.

UTAH Salt Lake City: One of Utah’s largest hospitals had no beds left Friday in its regular intensive-care unit as Gov. Gary Herbert declared the state’s weekslong spike in coronavirus cases “unsustainable.”

VERMONT Montpelier: The Department of Health is investigating an outbreak of COVID-19 cases related to youth and adult recreational hockey and broomball teams in central Vermont, officials said Friday, and Gov. Phil Scott directed skating rinks to halt reservations through Oct. 30.

VIRGINIA Fairfax: The board overseeing Virginia’s largest school district has failed to endorse a plan from its superintendent that would keep a majority of students fully online until February.

WASHINGTON Bellevue: Because of rising numbers of coronavirus cases in King County, the Bellevue School District is delaying in-person learning until January.

WEST VIRGINIA Short Gap: Frankfort Middle School has been shut down for cleaning after an employee tested positive for the coronavirus.

WISCONSIN Milwaukee: The state Department of Health Services has suspended the reporting of new COVID-19 totals until early next week while its computer system undergoes an upgrade.

WYOMING Casper: The University of Wyoming said seven students in a sorority house have tested positive for the coronavirus. Members of the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority who tested positive were put in isolation, while those who had close contact were told to quarantine, the Casper Star-Tribune reported.
From USA TODAY Network and wire reports

Tracking coronavirus cases across the states

KARINA ZAIETS, MITCHELL THORSON, SHAWN J. SULLIVAN, JANIE HASEMAN AND KARL GELLES/USA TODAY

8,127,000

CONFIRMED CASES IN THE U.S.

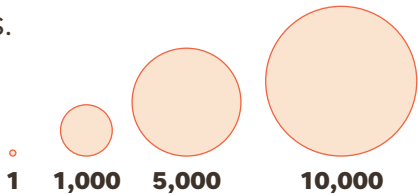
219,000

CONFIRMED DEATHS IN THE U.S.

Reported cases in the past 7 days

Each circle represents total numbers for one county:

Minneapolis (Hennepin County)
Past 7 days:
8,706 new cases
+53.5% change from previous week



Chicago (Cook County)
Past 7 days:
5,673 new cases
+19.3% previous week

New York City
Past 7 days:
575 new cases
+13.9% change from previous week

Atlanta (Fulton County)
Past 7 days:
736 new cases
-22.4% change from previous week

Miami-Dade County
Past 7 days:
3,781 new cases
69.1% change from previous week

Tampa (Hillsborough County)
Past 7 days:
1,467 new cases
+40.7% change from previous week

Houston
Past 7 days:
3,329 new cases
0% change from previous week

Honolulu
Past 7 days:
444 new cases
-11.6% change from previous week

El Paso
Past 7 days:
4,107 new cases
+49.5% change from previous week

Los Angeles
Past 7 days:
6,971 new cases
-7.4% change from previous week

Salt Lake City
Past 7 days:
3,673 new cases
+1.8% change from previous week

As of Saturday

Reported deaths in the past 7 days

Each dot represents total numbers for one county:

Minneapolis (Hennepin County)
Past 7 days:
11 deaths



Chicago (Cook County)
Past 7 days:
52 deaths

New York City
Past 7 days:
6 deaths

Atlanta (Fulton County)
Past 7 days:
15 deaths

Miami-Dade County
Past 7 days:
54 deaths

Tampa (Hillsborough County)
Past 7 days:
23 deaths

Houston
Past 7 days:
51 deaths

Honolulu
Past 7 days:
9 deaths

El Paso
Past 7 days:
20 deaths

Los Angeles
Past 7 days:
95 deaths

Salt Lake City
Past 7 days:
10 deaths

NOTE Some states do not report deaths by county
As of Saturday

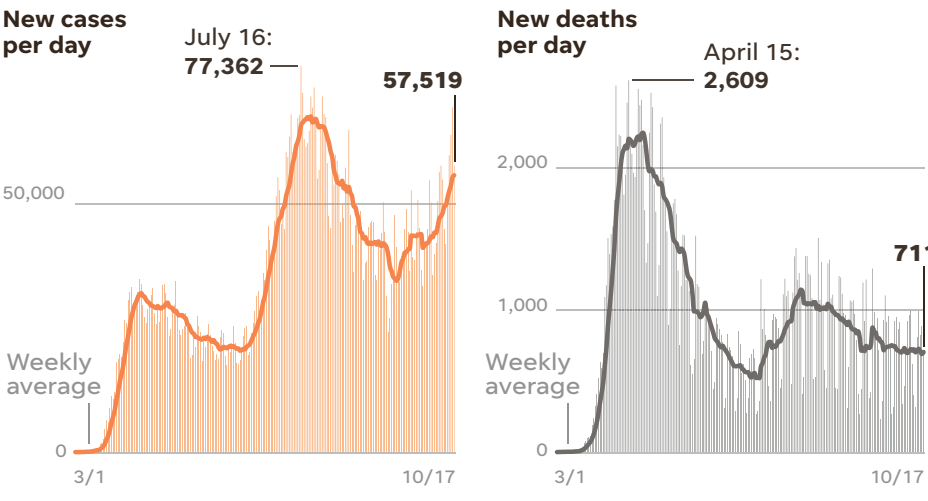
States experiencing rapid growth of COVID-19 cases

State	Total cases	New cases in past 7 days	Change from previous week	14-day trend
1 Florida	752,481	23,560	+64%	
2 Connecticut	62,830	2,792	+60%	
3 New Mexico	36,343	3,621	+49%	
4 Illinois	343,386	23,935	+44%	
5 Michigan	161,105	11,652	+42%	

As of Saturday

SOURCE Johns Hopkins University, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA TODAY research

Deaths and confirmed cases of COVID-19, by day



As of Saturday